THE LANGUAGES OF URBAN AFRICA

EDITED BY FIONA Mc LAUGHLIN

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ADVANCES IN SOCIOLINGUISTICS

The Languages of Urban Africa

Advances in Sociolinguistics

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Contents

Acknowledgments vi

Notes on Contributors vii

1 Introduction to the languages of urban Africa 1
Fiona Mc Laughlin

2 The historical dynamic of multilingualism in Accra 19
M. E. Kropp Dakubu

3 The story of old-urban vernaculars in North Africa 32
Atiqa Hachimi

4 The spread of Lingala as a lingua franca in the Congo Basin 50
Eyamba G. Bokamba

5 Senegal's early cities and the making of an urban language 71
Fiona Mc Laughlin

6 Discourse, community, identity: processes of linguistic homogenization in Bamako 86
Cécile Canut

7 The multiple facets of the urban language form, Nouchi 103
Sabine Kube-Barth

8 On assessing the ethnolinguistic vitality of Ga in Accra 115
James Essegbey

9 Multilingualism and language use in Porto Novo 131
Wale Adeniran

10 Language choice in Dar es Salaam's billboards 152
Charles Bwenge

11 Innovations on the fringes of the Kiswahili-speaking world 178
Haig Der-Houssikian

12 Polarizing and blending: compatible practices in a bilingual urban community in Cape Town 191
Kay McCormick

References 210

Index 229

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Casablanca
Dakar
Bamako
Porto Novo
Accra
Brazzaville
Kinshasa
Bujumbura
Dar es Salaam
Cape Town

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1 Introduction to the languages of urban Africa

Fiona Mc Laughlin

1.1 Language and the African city

The burgeoning growth of Africa's cities that began during the latter part of the colonial period and continues with increasing momentum into the twenty-first century has given rise to a multiplicity of innovative and often transformative cultural practices that are associated primarily with urban life, not least of which is the emergence of new urban language varieties. Through a series of case studies drawn from cities in different parts of the continent this volume explores multiple facets of African urban languages ranging from their pre-colonial and colonial histories to issues of language and identity in the post-colonial city, and from the demands that urban languages make on theoretical approaches to multilingualism to issues of endangerment and vitality of languages in the urban context. The cities discussed in the following chapters are located in the so-called francophone as well as anglophone countries of Africa, and range geographically from Casablanca in North Africa to Dakar, Bamako, Abidjan, Accra, and Porto Novo in West Africa, and from Kinshasa and Bujumbura in Central Africa to Dar es Salaam in East Africa, and finally Cape Town in South Africa. While West African cities are the best represented in the volume, case studies from most other parts of the continent are also provided, the notable exception being the Horn of Africa. Despite the many characteristics that African urban languages share, such as high variability and the influence of language contact, they nonetheless each have their own unique history and features, as this volume will help to elucidate.

The recent expansion of African cities can be attributed to general population growth within the continent as a whole, as well as the increased urbanization of these populations. When viewed against the backdrop of the continent's long history, urbanization constitutes a dramatic change in way of life and social organization for African populations, and the results can be felt in a variety of domains, including the social, political, cultural, economic, religious, and linguistic arenas. Today, Africa's cities are characterized by predominantly youthful

populations: by most estimates, approximately two-thirds of the African population as a whole is under 25 years of age, and as much as 50 percent of the population is no older than 15 years. When the demographics of African cities are considered in light of the ongoing economic crisis and unemployment on the continent, the challenges facing urban dwellers and the difficulty of life in urban Africa become apparent. The lack of an adequate infrastructure in many sectors such as housing, water and electricity, sanitation, roads, and public transport makes the physical environment of the African city a challenging one, and gives rise to all types of improvisations in the practice of everyday life. The many unique, creative, and often brilliant cultural adaptations to urban life that are applauded in contemporary scholarship on the African city are, it must be recognized, created more often out of necessity than choice.

1.1.1 Urban ways of speaking

The physical and social complexity of the contemporary African city is paralleled by an equally complex linguistic situation. There are approximately two thousand African languages, or one-third of the total number of languages in the world. All African countries are multilingual, and in some of them hundreds of different languages are spoken. Profound multilingualism is, then, a fact of life on the continent, and is intensified in the city, which attracts a substantial number of people from rural areas who speak minority languages. In many cases, one or more urban vernaculars have emerged to become the language(s) of the city. These are most often dominant African languages that show evidence of contact with a former colonial language, but not the colonial (or official) languages themselves. Some of them, such as urban Lingala in Congo (see Bokamba's Chapter 4 on the expansion of Lingala in the Congo Basin) and urban Wolof in Senegal, have domains of use that expand beyond the city. Wolof in particular has expanded to fill the role of a national lingua franca in Senegal (Mc Laughlin 2008b). As the case studies in this volume show, although there are some generalizations that can be made about the languages of urban Africa such as the fact that they are almost never the official language, each city is unique, and the particular linguistic outcome is the result of a complex variety of factors, including the ethnic and linguistic make-up of the city, the history and patterns of urbanization, the legacy of colonial policies, and numerous other factors. While most studies of contemporary urban African languages focus on the postcolonial period, one has only to compare the emergence of urban vernaculars in Dakar and Abidjan, two West African coastal capitals in countries (Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire,

respectively) that were once colonized by France, to see the importance of a longer historical view that can explain why a variety of French emerged in the case of Abidjan (see Kube-Barth's Chapter 7 on Nouchi spoken in Abidjan) and a variety of Wolof in Dakar.

Moving into the twenty-first century, it becomes increasingly clear that the rural–urban divide in Africa is becoming highly significant in political, economic, and social terms. It is also true of language, in the sense that urban dwellers can be distinguished from their rural counterparts by the way they speak. To speak an urban language is to articulate an urban identity. Migrants to the city adapt and modify the ways in which they speak as part of the process of becoming urban. Knowing how to speak an urban language, as I have suggested elsewhere (Mc Laughlin 2001), is part of what Mbembe (1997) calls urban knowledge, and mastering an urban dialect is a measure of a person's integration into the urban milieu. In some cases, urban languages are unique to the city, but they are often urban varieties of languages that are also spoken in rural areas. In this latter case, people are often able to manipulate a variety of forms along a rural–urban continuum (see in particular Chapter 6 by Canut), and report a variety of lexical, morphological, and syntactic changes to their speech in the urban context. The allure and modernity of the African city have contributed to the prestige often associated with urban languages, but because of their association with urbanization and the loss of what is often perceived nostalgically as a more traditional and authentically African way of life, the same languages are often criticized as being somehow illegitimate or debased, especially when they exhibit heavy borrowing from a former colonial language. Attitudes towards urban varieties, then, are complex and reflect a general ambivalence toward life in the city, with its combination of promise and frustration.

1.1.2 The role of official languages

In most African countries the official language is the language of the former colonial power—usually French, English, or Portuguese. As official languages they have, since independence, typically been used in the official domains of power such as government and bureaucracy as well as formal education, thereby creating a language-based system of social stratification that favors a small, educated African elite and limits access to economic betterment for the majority of the African population. African elites have also played a role in perpetuating these inequalities by keeping power in their own hands and recruiting new elites from their own ranks, in a process that Myers-Scotton (1993a) has dubbed elite closure. With only a few exceptions, African languages

have not traditionally been the languages of power and economic advancement via education, but rather the languages of solidarity that are acquired outside formal contexts. But the traditional paradigm of access to economic and social advancement through mastery of the official language and education is beginning to change. Rampant unemployment among university graduates has rendered the value of such an education debatable, and families and individuals are less willing to invest the time and money necessary for a university degree if there is little prospect of work at the end. Some have instead turned to entrepreneurialism as a surer way of earning a living, and others still have turned to migration when they see few prospects at home. From a linguistic point of view, then, the official, ex-colonial language in many cases no longer has the allure it once had, and its hegemony is staring to erode.

1.1.3 The graphic environment

The linguistic environment in an African city also comprises the graphic environment, a term used by Calvet (1994) to mean the occurrence and depiction of written language in public space. The concept of graphic environment is essentially the equivalent of what recent studies such as Gorter (2006) and Backhaus (2007) refer to as the linguistic landscape; but I prefer Calvet's term because it more explicitly refers to the written word. The multilingualism that characterizes African cities is also apparent in the graphic environment, but generally in a highly circumscribed fashion since not all languages that are spoken in the city are used in written form or appear in written form in public space. In general, the languages that dominate in written form are the official languages (English, French, Portuguese, etc.) but other languages can also find their niche on the walls of businesses, in advertising (as described in Bwenge's Chapter 10 on billboards in Dar es Salaam), and painted on public transport, to name just a few venues.

In African countries and regions where Islam is the predominant religion, two distinct alphabets may be used for writing, the Roman and Arabic alphabets, resulting in a situation of digraphia.[1] As Calvet (1994) points out, the relationship between language and writing system is not always iconic. In Senegal, for example, Wolof, Pulaar, and Maninka can be written in the Arabic or Roman scripts, and it is not uncommon to see Arabic phrases written in the Roman script or French phrases written in the Arabic script. Calvet (1994: 177–8) considers this fluctuation "indicative of a situation of transition between orality and writing, of a society where the relationship to the written is not yet fixed."

The extent to which urban languages or urban varieties are actually written is an interesting question that requires much more research. Ephemeral media like text messaging on cellular phones or e-mail or internet chat rooms appear to be the prime locations for written forms of urban languages because they are genres that are less formal than other types of writing, and they aim to imitate spoken language. While the focus of this volume is on spoken language, it would be wrong to ignore the written urban environment because it, too, provides many insights into the nature of language in urban Africa.

1.2 Multilingualism and language contact in the city

One of the most important outcomes of the burgeoning growth of African cities is an intensification of the linguistic environment and an increase in multilingualism. Multilingualism, however, has two different meanings, both in the urban context and in general. First, it refers to societal multilingualism or the co-existence of multiple languages in a particular space—here the urban space—but does not necessarily imply that the individual speakers themselves are multilingual, even though many of them might be. Second, multilingualism may refer to an individual's competence in two or more languages, in other words individual multilingualism. In general, and due to the influx of populations that speak minority languages both from within the country and from other regions in Africa and abroad, African cities are more multilingual now than at any other point in their history. In cases where a single urban language dominates, newcomers will add that language to their repertoire because it provides them access to the city and is a prerequisite for integration into urban life, thus individual multilingualism for this category of speaker is augmented. But urban vernaculars can also have the opposite effect, especially when generational shift in urban areas is considered. Consider the example of the Dakar family cited in Mc Laughlin (2008b). The parents, now in their late sixties, are both native speakers of Seereer who came to Dakar in their twenties but have always spoken fluent Wolof, the dominant urban language, as well. They speak Seereer to each other. Their children, in their thirties and forties, have a passive knowledge of Seereer but are not very fluent. When the parents speak to their children the conversations are often bilingual—the parents speak Seereer and the children Wolof—or completely in Wolof. The next generation, that of the grandchildren, does not understand Seereer. They speak only Wolof to their parents and grandparents and consequently Seereer is not used as much in the household as it used to be. In this situation, which is a common one in urban Senegal and is mirrored

in cities throughout the continent, the urban language contributes to generational language shift and the youngest generation is no longer multilingual in African languages.[2] As these examples show, the question of multilingualism in the African city is a very complex one that can show contradictory trends towards one kind of multilingualism (societal multilingualism) but away from another (individual multilingualism).

1.2.1 Multilingualism and the disposition of the city

African cities are vast heterogeneous and heteroglossic spaces that are frequently made up of smaller, more coherent neighborhoods. Some of these, like Cape Town's District Six discussed in McCormick's Chapter 12, have taken on unique linguistic identities and fashioned their own urban ways of speaking. The organizing principle of such neighborhoods may be ethnic, linguistic, religious, or any other number of factors along which people align themselves. It may also be that people from a smaller town or a village tend to live in the same neighborhood in the city because they can transfer their longstanding social networks intact to the urban environment thereby facilitating their integration. And in cities where large numbers of refugees or migrant populations from other parts of Africa or elsewhere have moved in, they may live close to one another because of common experience or out of a sense of difference from the rest of the urban population. The physical geography and economics of the city may also play a role in settlement patterns as Abdullah (2002: 207) writes about pre-civil war Freetown, Sierra Leone:

> The East End is not only the gateway to the city from the hinterland, it is also close to the industrial area and the city's major port—where many a migrant from the hinterland could easily get a job as a laborer. Migrants from the hinterland therefore make it their first port of call, a place to set up shop until they can find suitable accommodations.

Such neighborhoods are more easily defined in some cities than others, but all cities are to a certain extent composed of smaller, more homogeneous neighborhoods.

The existence of such neighborhoods has important consequences for how minority languages fare in the city. Although the urban lingua franca may be used in broader urban networks, the languages of ethnic minorities may be robustly maintained if such environments are stable. Juillard (1995), for example, describes just such a situation in the Senegalese city of Ziguinchor where minority languages such as Joola,

Pulaar, and Mandinka dominate in certain neighborhoods even as Wolof gradually replaces Portuguese Creole as the lingua franca of the city.

1.2.2 Language contact

Perhaps the most significant linguistic consequence of multilingual situations such as those described above has to do with the way that the various languages influence each other, not just in terms of borrowing, but also in terms of phonological, morphological, and syntactic change that comes about as the result of contact. There is much evidence that the types of morpho-syntactic convergence that Heine and Kuteva (2006) report for Europe are also at work in the African context, and especially in cities. Urban varieties of minority languages in Africa have been little studied, but preliminary observations show that they are often influenced by dominant urban lingua francas.

Furthermore, speakers of different dialects of a language or of closely related languages who live in proximity in the city may create a koinéized version of the language which tends to retain the features that different varieties have in common while disfavoring features that are specific to only one of the dialects. This process can be seen in some neighborhoods of Dakar where speakers of Casamance Portuguese Creole and Cape Verdean Creole live together, or Pulaar speakers from northern Senegal interact with Guinean Pular speakers from Fuuta Jaloo.[3] As these preliminary observations suggest, the linguistic complexity of African cities demands much more research, but the results promise to be extremely interesting.

1.2.3 Urban vernaculars

Shifting perspective from minority languages to urban vernaculars with large numbers of speakers, the issues are somewhat different. The reasons for why certain languages become urban vernaculars and others do not are to be found in the individual histories of the languages and particularly in their colonial histories. A great many of Africa's cities came into being during the colonial period, as a direct consequence of colonialism, and were originally planned and modeled on European cities. This is reflected in the increased urbanization of the coastal areas of Africa during the colonial period, the first places of European and African contact, to the disadvantage of inland urban centers, many of which went into a decline. An example of large-scale shift in urban settlements can be seen in the gradual shift away from—and often outright abandonment of—urban centers on the old trans-Saharan trade routes,

toward the West African coast as a place of contact and trade between Africans and Europeans. The languages that eventually emerged as urban vernaculars were often the original language of these colonial urban settlements, as illustrated in my Chapter 5 on Senegal's early cities. In some cases the languages that became urban vernaculars also became regional lingua francas, as is the case for Swahili in East Africa, Hausa in Nigeria, and Lingala in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of Congo (Mufwene 2008: 258). The history of the spread of Lingala is discussed in some depth in Bokamba's Chapter 4.

One of the most interesting questions related to the emergence of urban vernaculars is what happens to these languages as they acquire more and more speakers. Considering the role of language contact discussed above, and given that in many cases there are more non-native speakers than native speakers of urban vernaculars, then surely they must be particularly vulnerable to certain kinds of restructuring. Of the relatively few studies that have been done on the structure of urban vernaculars, morphological simplification is most often cited as the primary type of restructuring. Restructuring of this sort may go on in the verbal system where the number of tense and aspectual distinctions is reduced, or it may occur in the large inflectional noun class systems that are characteristic of Niger-Congo languages. In the latter case, classes may be merged or reduced or a default class may be favored, especially for the large number of nominal borrowings from colonial languages that characterize African urban vernaculars. Restructuring of the noun class system is reported for urban Wolof (Mc Laughlin 1997), urban Lingala, as illustrated in Bokamba's chapter, and for many other languages. The extent to which languages become simplified rather than simply restructured is open to debate, as is the notion of linguistic simplicity. In many cases, synthetic forms are replaced by analytic structures. This would definitely be a case of restructuring, but it is not so clear cut as to whether it would also be considered a case of simplification, so it may be best to avoid such generalizations about African urban vernaculars until we know more about what is happening to their grammars.

1.2.4 Youth and other specialized languages

In addition to widely spoken urban vernaculars, other types of exclusive languages can come into being in Africa's cities as the result of processes of social differentiation. Among these are the various youth languages found throughout the continent, spoken mostly by young men, and surveyed by Kiessling and Mous (2004). By their very nature, youth languages are short lived and rapidly changing because they are premised

on the assumption that others cannot understand them. Youth languages generally originate with lexical borrowing from other languages or from slang varieties, including the argots of crime and delinquence, and exhibit high variation. After they become established as youth languages and their speakers grow older they may be adopted by the general urban population and can subsequently become urban vernaculars themselves. One of the best known of these is Sheng, a youth language that originated in the Eastlands neighborhood of Nairobi in the 1970s, which draws its structure primarily from Swahili and English but also borrows lexical items from other Kenyan languages. But as its original speakers grow older and retain the language, it is no longer exclusively a youth language but is now expanding its role to become an urban language of wider communication (Abdulaziz and Osinde 1997; Kiessling and Mous 2004). A parallel situation is reported for Abidjan in Kube-Barth's Chapter 7, where a youth language, Nouchi, is expanding to become an urban vernacular.

Other language varieties that come into being as a means of social differentiation include the South African varieties Iscamtho and Flaaitaal or Tsotsitaal, and the Congolese variety Indoubil (Goyvaerts 1988), described by Bokamba in Chapter 4. Iscamtho, according to Ntshangase (2002: 407), originally developed as a criminal language and now "reflects an urban identity and, at the same time, the social barriers between its users and non-users." Primarily the domain of young men, Iscamtho operates "through" another Bantu language such as Zulu or Sotho as described by Ntshangase:

> Iscamtho is a language that is used "through" another language—a type of basilect, yet it retains its own defining feature, that is, it has no structure of its own since it relies heavily on the language structures of the languages from which it "operates." This means that it has not yet developed its own syntactic base which will make it linguistically independent of the base languages. (2002: 407)

At this point in its development, according to Kiessling and Mous 2004, Iscamtho, like Indoubil, has been widely adopted by older speakers and can no longer be considered a youth language. Flaaitaal, also known as Tsotsitaal, shares some sociolinguistic features with Iscamtho although the two have quite different histories. Flaaitaal, according to Makhudu (2002: 399), is spoken predominantly by "African males between the ages of 15 and 54" and is "largely an urban male phenomenon." But unlike Iscamtho, "it seems to have been initially reliant on Afrikaans for structure and a variety of languages for its lexis" (2002: 398). Makhudu continues, "To the uninitiated ear, Flaaitaal might sound like a variety of Afrikaans; but such a conclusion would overlook its robust

Bantu language texture" (2002: 398). Exclusive varieties such as youth or other special languages like Sheng, Nouchi, Iscamtho, Flaaitaal, and Indoubil are typical of urban environments, especially where youth predominate, but they can, in time, become urban languages and even languages of wider communication.

1.2.5 The African city in discourses of globalization and language endangerment

African cities are often mentioned in the current discourse on globalization and language endangerment as sites of linguistic and cultural homogenization and of language attrition. In many cases, assumptions are made about Africa based on what are considered to be parallel situations of language endangerment in North America and Australia, regions that have recently experienced a large-scale shift from indigenous languages to English, the colonial language. But the African situation is quite different, as emerging work like the case studies in Vigouroux and Mufwene (2008) show, and demands a careful consideration of the linguistic ecology of individual situations. In Africa, colonial languages like English and French are not responsible for language attrition, as illustrated in the example of the Seereer family in Dakar, described in section 2: Wolof, not French, is replacing Seereer for the younger, urbanized generation. This pattern of dominant urban vernaculars and national or regional lingua francas threatening minority African languages is a much more realistic one, but even then, it needs to be tempered since the acquisition of one of these languages by speakers of a minority language is often additive to their linguistic repertoire rather than replacive. The more concrete result of the spread of African urban vernaculars and regional lingua francas is the stemming of the spread of colonial languages. As Mufwene (2001; 2008) has pointed out, a more subtle study of the ecology of multilingualism is necessary for an understanding of the fate of Africa's languages because languages can only threaten others within the same domain of use. Consider the type of urban neighborhood described in Section 2.1, where a minority language is used on a consistent basis in neighborhood interactions and at home. Even though its speakers also speak the urban vernacular, the two languages are not really in competition because one is used at a micro-level while the other is used for communication in a wider arena, thus they have distinct domains of use. By the same token, a concrete example of language endangerment is reported by Juillard (1995) where Portuguese Creole, the erstwhile urban vernacular of Ziguinchor in southern Senegal, is being replaced by Wolof, but the minority languages of Mandinka, Joola, and Pulaar are not. The reason that Wolof can

threaten Portuguese Creole in Ziguinchor is because they compete in the same domain of use—as urban vernaculars. The other languages spoken in Ziguinchor are not urban vernaculars and as a consequence Wolof poses no great threat to them in that domain.

An interesting twist on how the urban environment promotes linguistic and cultural homogenization is presented in Canut's chapter on Bamako, Mali. Canut claims that language ideology in the form of homogenizing discourses by political, cultural, and activist groups that emerge in the city contributes to a type of erasure (Irvine and Gal 2000) that renders micro-level diversity invisible. In other words, the differences in dialects and individual multilingual repertoires are ignored in order to promote the idea of a well-defined, homogeneous language or ethnic group.

Africa does not fare well in the global economic system, and one of the byproducts of the African economic crisis is legal and clandestine migration both within Africa and to the West, primarily Europe and the United States. The linguistic consequences of African migration are only beginning to be studied, but it is nevertheless possible to isolate a few trends. The starting point for migration is often the city since that is where visas are procured or contacts are made for clandestine migration. Among compatriots abroad, the African urban vernacular is often the lingua franca, and speakers of minority languages have claimed that their competence in a vehicular language such as Lingala or Wolof improved through interaction with their compatriots abroad. In a number of cases, when a critical mass of speakers of an African language establish themselves in a neighborhood abroad, as for example in the suburbs of Paris, their language is transmitted to the next generation under very different circumstances, and unsurprisingly it undergoes changes due to the different linguistic environment in which it is spoken. As a result, new varieties of African urban languages are emerging far from their origins, in the cities of Europe and North America. Finally, Vigouroux (2008) reports on the revitalized use of French among migrants from various "francophone" African countries in "anglophone" South African cities, an emerging *francophonie* which looks very different from the official ideology of *La Francophonie* as promoted by France, Canada, and Belgium in particular. As new studies emerge on globalization and language vitality and endangerment in the African context, we will have a better idea of the role that African cities play in this arena.

1.2.6 Urban languages and their histories

Research on urban languages in Africa is a fairly new phenomenon and as a consequence, studies have tended to focus on contemporary cities

and linguistic situations. Recent advances in the field of sociohistorical linguistics, however, have helped produce ambitious historical studies of urban language such as Lodge's (2004) sociolinguistic history of Parisian French, and it is to be hoped that this type of study can eventually be undertaken for African urban languages as well, despite the paucity of written documentation.

The promotion of certain languages to the status of urban vernaculars is in many cases linked to their colonial history, especially when the city in question came into being as the result of European expansion. Certainly, pre-colonial factors play a significant role in the process as well, as illustrated very clearly in Dakubu's Chapter 2 on Accra, but if it is difficult to find substantial bodies of linguistic and sociolinguistic data from the colonial period, it is even more difficult to do so for the pre-colonial period. As we learn more about the ways in which social interaction in contexts of inequality and exploitation affect linguistic outcomes, and as we learn more about colonial societies in general, it becomes possible to at least put forth some hypotheses concerning the sociohistorical settings in which African urban vernaculars emerged, as I have done in my chapter on Senegal's early cities.

More recent history, too, has left its mark on urban languages. War and its attendant displacement of populations in parts of west and central Africa, apartheid in South Africa, and ecological changes in the Sahel have all affected language in those regions. Writing in 1983, Yanco reports on a situation of what amounts to passive bilingualism in Niamey, the capital of Niger. The language of the original inhabitants of the city is Zarma, a Songhay dialect, while the lingua franca of southern Niger is Hausa. Yanco documents many instances of bilingual conversations where speakers of Zarma and Hausa speak in their own language while understanding their interlocutor who is speaking the other language. This kind of urban equilibrium was slightly disrupted a decade later when drought forced pastoralist populations of Fula-speaking Woɗaaɓe and Tamasheq-speaking Tuareg, many of whom often speak Hausa as well, into Niamey. At the beginning of the 1990s I witnessed several instances of initially failed interactions on the streets of Niamey between people who could not understand each other, but the situation was usually rectified by calling in a third party to mediate, usually via Hausa but sometimes French. Whether the outcome of this linguistic intensification of Niamey has ultimately resulted in new populations learning Zarma or in the expansion of Hausa as the urban vernacular is a topic that merits looking into.

Research on the history of African urban languages, including precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial histories, is thus a valuable addition to the emerging field of historical sociolinguistics and has the potential

to contribute important insights to the field. In addition, it opens the way for more interdisciplinary discussions on the African city by making linguistic work more accessible to historians, anthropologists, and others in the social sciences and humanities.

1.3 Language and urban identities

The field of sociolinguistics, like many other disciplines, has in recent years seen a proliferation of studies that address the notion of identity. As an essential aspect of urban knowledge, speaking an urban language is central to the notion of an urban identity, as illustrated by Hachimi for Fessis (people from Fez) in Casablanca in Chapter 3, and for members of the Ga ethnic group in Accra as shown by Essegbey in Chapter 8. Language can, in fact, have a very profound effect on the ways in which people identify themselves, and within the African context it can often, but certainly not always, be considered a strong correlate of ethnicity. In the urban context, however, when language shift is added into the equation, new, post-ethnic urban identities can emerge as I have shown in earlier work for Dakar. In Mc Laughlin (2001: 170) I describe a situation where people who were born and raised in Dakar and who have readily identifiable ethnic names prefer, when questioned, to say simply that they are "from Dakar" rather than saying that they are members of a specific ethnic group. This is due partly to the fact that the only African language they speak is the urban vernacular, urban Wolof, but they do not consider themselves to be ethnically Wolof. In Chapter 2, Dakubu also claims an ethnically neutral role for English and Hausa in Ghana's capital, Accra. People choose to speak one or the other, rather than Akan or Ga, because they have no implication for ethnic identity. Going further, Dakubu suggests that this is a specifically urban phenomenon. From examples such as this it is clear that urban languages both shape and are shaped by the social context in which they are spoken, and are central to the emerging concept of a post-ethnic, urban identity.

On the other hand, in Canut's chapter on Bamako (Chapter 6) she takes an explicit anti-identitarian stance which criticizes the overuse of "identity" in the social sciences as a meaningless term that often serves simply to cover up problem areas of the data. Canut claims that metalinguistic discourses in towns and villages outside Bamako do not engage with notions of identity, and that it is an externally imposed metric that distorts the complexity of the linguistic situation. Canut's contribution in this area is a stimulating one that echoes many of the same objections to the term as Brubaker and Cooper do in their (2000) article, "Beyond 'identity.'" Studies that deal with issues of identity

are, no doubt, here to stay, but Canut challenges researchers to rethink the concept.

1.4 The case studies

As will become apparent, the cities discussed in this volume all constitute complex linguistic environments, and authors have chosen to focus on one aspect or another of those environments. In her chapter on the historical dynamic of multilingualism in Accra, Dakubu takes the broad view by discussing the linguistic environment of Ghana's capital city, Accra, across time and space. Her contribution highlights the different ways in which people view the four-language system in use in Accra (Akan, Ga, Hausa, and English) depending on who they are, and how this is reflected in their linguistic practices. She also asks whether there is, in fact, anything unique about the sociolinguistics of African cities, and suggests an affirmative answer for Accra.

Hachimi's chapter, the only one in the collection that deals with North Africa, provides a fascinating look at competition among urban dialects in the Maghreb, with a focus on what happens to Moroccan Arabic speakers from Fez, a medieval city, when they move to the new urban center of Casablanca. Hachimi moves from a discussion of how the old-urban vernaculars of the Maghreb (from Tunis, Tlemcen, Fez, and Rabat) which "have defined prestigious linguistic practice in the area for centuries" have fared in modern times, to what their relationship is to the modern koinés.

In his expansive chapter on the spread of Lingala in the Congo Basin, Bokamba provides a compelling look at how Lingala, which is not an ethnic language, emerged to become a regional lingua franca and the vernacular of two African capitals, Kinshasa and Brazzaville. In tracing the trajectory of Lingala from its origins in the Central Equateur Province in the mid-1800s to its role as an urban vernacular and lingua franca in the Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo, Bokamba shows that "language spread is a much more complex and non-linear phenomenon than it has generally been portrayed."

In my chapter on Senegal's early cities, Chapter 5, I argue that the emergence of Wolof as an urban language was cotemporaneous with the emergence of early urbanism, and especially the development and peopling of the island cities of Gorée and Saint-Louis. I present evidence from a variety of historical sources to support this point, and argue in favor of looking at the social history of urban languages in Africa as a way of understanding how urban vernaculars come to occupy the linguistic eco-niches that they do.

Canut's chapter on processes of linguistic homogenization in Bamako, Mali, Chapter 6, questions the ways in which linguists and anthropologists categorize language varieties. Canut advocates a speaker-based approach to multilingual phenomena by rejecting classificatory categories that do not originate with speakers' metalinguistic discourse. This changes the very nature of fieldwork, moving away from a methodology in which subjects respond to the anthropologist's or linguist's questions, and towards longer periods of close observation. Canut sees this as a better way of understanding the complexities of the multidirectional linguistic continuum that exists between village, town, and city that she investigates in western Mali.

Kube-Barth's chapter, Chapter 7, reports on a survey she conducted among secondary school students on Nouchi, a hybrid urban youth language spoken in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. The survey involved attitudes toward Nouchi, French, and Ivorian languages, toward Ivorian language policies and multilingualism in general, and additionally includes students' suggestions for future language policies. Kube-Barth concludes that Nouchi appears to be a serious alternative for speakers caught between French, the language of the former colonial power and the only language with official status in Côte d'Ivoire, and their indigenous languages which do not benefit from any official status and are being used less and less in everyday communication in the multiethnic city. As such, Nouchi is a good example of a youth language that has evolved into an urban vernacular.

In Chapter 8, Essegbey focuses on the vitality of the Ga language in Accra. Although the Ga are the original inhabitants of the city, they consider their language threatened by the predominance of Akan in what Essegbey refers to as the "sprawl area" or the greater urban area. Through an analysis of a variety of indicators of linguistic vitality, Essegbey shows that although Akan is gaining ground, Ga is still quite vibrant in the original neighborhood of the Ga township. His contribution is a good example of the way a minority language can be maintained in a more or less homogenous ethnolinguistic neighborhood even though its speakers almost all also speak a more dominant urban vernacular.

Adeniran's contribution in Chapter 9 provides a fascinating look at Porto Novo, a city in francophone Benin on the border with anglophone Nigeria. Porto Novo is a highly multilingual city in which 12 languages are spoken, with Egun, French, Yoruba, and English being the predominant languages. Adeniran's documentation of the use of English as a second language of wider communication in a francophone country opens up a promising line of research on the fate of colonial languages

in Africa. In Porto Novo, as in parts of Central Africa, French may be losing ground to English as a neutral lingua franca, a situation that would mirror a global trend as well.[4]

Turning now to the graphic environment of the city discussed above, Bwenge provides an in-depth look at the language of billboard advertising in Tanzania's capital, Dar es Salaam, in Chapter 10. Unlike most African countries, Tanzania promoted an indigenous African language, Swahili, as co-official with English, thereby creating a power balance of sorts between the two languages. In mapping out the distribution of Swahili and English billboards along the main thoroughfares of the city, Bwenge shows that at the time of his research in 2005, advertisements in English increased gradually on the trajectory from the suburbs toward the city center. Interestingly, when he examined billboards on the same thoroughfares in 2007, the situation had changed somewhat in favor of Swahili.

Der-Houssikian's chapter, Chapter 11, based on his student Spink's fieldwork in Bujumbura in the 1990s, documents an early stage of the spread of Swahili to urban Burundi. Based on an analysis of written texts, Der-Houssikian analyzes the ways in which this new form of Swahili differs from more standard varieties of the language. Most interestingly, he proposes that this early contact variety is largely unsystematic and refers to it as RA, a shorthand for the "reckless abandon" that he claims characterizes this new variety. This chapter is extremely interesting for its glimpse at a nascent variety of Swahili, and should inspire further studies on how the language has fared 10–15 years on.

Finally, McCormick's contribution, Chapter 12, focuses on the local bilingual vernacular spoken in what remains of inner-city Cape Town's old, working-class, but cosmopolitan and diverse, District Six. The two languages involved, English and Afrikaans, are socially and functionally polarized in Cape Town as in South Africa in general, but in District Six they are blended to form a unique local way of speaking. McCormick shows how speakers of the bilingual vernacular have used language to create a group identity, despite the ways in which they—and their language—have been considered inferior by speakers of Afrikaans and of English.

1.5 The future of research on African urban languages

If, as Simone (2004) claims, African cities are a work in progress, so too are their languages. As the essays in this volume illustrate, urban languages are in flux and can sometimes change rapidly since they are characterized by great variation, both within the speech community

and at the level of the individual speaker. The social, cultural, and economic changes that are going on in African cities today will no doubt have a profound effect on the evolution of urban languages, thus it is important to document them now in order to have a basis for future comparison that will provide insights on how such languages change.

Fortunately, African cities are starting to receive the attention they deserve from linguists and anthropologists. Since Heine's pioneering survey of African lingua francas in 1970, edited volumes such as Gouaini and Thiam (1992), Calvet (1992), and Miehe et al. (2007) to mention only a few, have highlighted the diversity of Africa's urban languages. More in-depth and integrated sociolinguistic studies, along the lines of Juillard (1995), Dakubu (1997), McCormick (2002), and Deuber (2005), are needed for cities all over the continent in order to enhance our knowledge of what these languages are like and how they shape and are shaped by the cities in which they are spoken.

As studies such as this emerge they will no doubt contribute to a variety of different intellectual enterprises within linguistics and across disciplines. Urban sociolinguistics has always posed unique methodological and theoretical challenges, and previous breakthroughs in this area, such as Labov (1972) and Milroy (1980), have not yet dealt with the intense multilingualism of African cities. Recent research on language contact has taken the field in new directions, investing speakers—rather than languages—with agency, and it is to be expected that many of the insights emerging from this field will be invaluable to the study of African urban languages and vice versa, as will comparisons with cities in other parts of the world such as Asia or Latin America. The effects of African colonial history on language, as scholars like Irvine (1993; 1995) and Jeater (2001) have shown, have been far-reaching and profound, and the sociohistorical linguistics of African cities promises to be a productive area of research for linguists and historians alike. Finally, by providing a close look at what the dynamics of language use in multiple urban areas throughout the continent can tell us about urban African societies, as this volume aims to do, we can start to look forward to a central role for linguistics in interdisciplinary ways of thinking about African cities.

Notes

1 The essays in this volume do not cover the northeastern part of the continent or the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia, Eritrea, etc.) where other scripts are used in addition to Roman and Arabic. Studies of urban languages in this region would no doubt add an interesting facet to the discussion of the graphic environment in Africa's cities.

2 In the case of the family cited above, they all also speak French, the official language, so the grandchildren are at least bilingual, but French is rarely used in the home context.
3 Pulaar is the northern Senegalese dialect of Fula and Pular is the dialect spoken in the highlands of northern Guinea.
4 For a counterexample, though, see Vigouroux (2008), on *francophonie* in South Africa.

2 The historical dynamic of multilingualism in Accra

M. E. Kropp Dakubu

2.1 Introduction: a linguistic profile of Accra

This chapter considers the linguistic environment of Accra, the capital of Ghana, in time and space. To put it very briefly, Accra can be characterized as operating with a system of four languages: English, Akan, Hausa, and Ga. These are the languages with the largest numbers of speakers in the city, and are by far the most likely to be spoken as second languages. However, the nature of the system as well as its terms depends very largely on whose point of view is adopted. It is extracted in the first place by me as an outside observer. I believe it tallies with the point of view of Ga people, the indigenous population[1] although not all Ga take much cognizance of Hausa, and on the other hand not all the Hausa-speaking residents take much cognizance of Ga. From the point of view of Akan people, who constitute about 43 percent of the population of the country and the largest linguistic grouping among Ghanaians now living in the city,[2] it depends to some extent on their socio-economic level and the context in which they work; many certainly think that only Akan and English matter. For large numbers of migrants from other linguistic areas, on the other hand, including almost all the speakers of Hausa, a fifth language should be added, their first language (L1), the language of where they come from. There are of course dozens if not hundreds of these additional languages, from all parts of Ghana and the subregion, to confine ourselves to the African population.

As indicated, Ga is the language of the group considered indigenous. It has approximately 550,000 L1 speakers and an unknown but probably larger number of second language (L2) speakers. However most people believe that, except perhaps in some of the most traditional quarters of the city, and possibly even there, Akan, which has a far larger L1 community of several millions, is more generally heard. Ga and Akan are both Kwa languages and indigenous to southern Ghana, but not at all closely related. Hausa is the language of a Hausa community originating from northern Nigeria that has had a colony in Accra for more than a century, but that is not what makes it part of the four-language

system. Because for various historical reasons it was adopted in the colonial army and police as the language of command and as the lingua franca of the other ranks, who came from a wide variety of places but not, in general, from what became southern Ghana, after World War II when large numbers of ex-servicemen settled around the city, Hausa became widely used as a lingua franca among migrants from northern Ghana and the savannah regions of West Africa generally. English of course is the former colonial language, now the main language of education, literacy, and government, but also it seems, more and more widely spoken in non-standard varieties for quite informal purposes. Neither English nor Hausa is related to any "indigenous" Ghanaian language. All of this is discussed in detail in Dakubu (1997).

In this chapter I will address the question of what, if anything, is distinctively urban about the linguistic configuration of Accra. First however I would like to digress to explain exactly what kind of research I have done on this topic, and why, and what its limitations are.

2.2 A brief history of the research behind the present study

Beginning in the 1970s I have from time to time conducted surveys of multilingualism among different groups in Accra, the capital city of Ghana. My main focus most of the time has been the history and present structure of the Ga language, not its sociology. However the home territory of Ga is almost coterminous with the city of Accra, and becoming more exactly so as the city mushrooms, and it gradually became obvious to me that this situation was an intimate part of its linguistic essence. The surveys are essentially self-reporting of linguistic repertoires, how they were acquired and to some extent what they are used for, through structured questionnaires administered by an interviewer. They have all been administered with reference to particular ethnic groups, and the interviewing has never been done by me, but by assistants who spoke the language(s) of the respondents.

I was drawn to do these surveys in the first place in reaction to the received wisdom then prevailing in Ghana, among linguists of Ghanaian origin as well as foreign, about what "everybody" spoke. It was "common knowledge" in the 1960s and 1970s that Hausa was the lingua franca of the north of Ghana, and that in the south Akan in one or other of its regional forms was spoken by practically everybody except maybe some of the Ewe, but that at the same time, everybody loyally maintained the language of the place they identified with ethnically, their "home town" in local parlance, wherever they might happen to be living. I had reason to believe that the generalization about northerners, and the almost

universal assumption that their use of Hausa in Accra reflected the pattern in the north itself, was not true. It also needed to be determined whether Akan was a true lingua franca, as Hausa in Ghana undoubtedly is, used between people neither of whom spoke it as L1, or whether it was used as L2 primarily for communication with Akans, who were indisputably the largest single language group, although not a national majority. What data existed (from the Madina Project, directed out by Berry and Ansre in the late 1960s and discussed in Apronti 1974) seemed to me to indicate that the latter was the actual situation, although it was not interpreted this way.

In retrospect, I think that the slowness of linguists in appreciating the dynamic of the Accra urban multilingual situation had something to do with the historical situation in which Accra and also individual linguists themselves then were. Although it has always attracted migrants, Accra was not a large town until after World War II. In 1954 the population was still less than 200,000 (Acquah 1958: 31). It is now 2.5 million (Ghana Statistical Service 2002: 3), but as recently as 1984, just 20 years ago, it was still not quite one million (Oti-Boateng et al. 1989). In other words, the urban explosion took a while to make itself felt, and in the 1970s it was still possible to think, although not necessarily correctly, that the migrant population was mostly recent and temporary.

The growth of linguistics as a discipline in the University of Ghana was part of this post-war, and post-independence, growth. Up until the mid-1960s there were very few Ghanaian academics, but around that time their numbers relative to the total academic staff grew tremendously, the result of a deliberate policy of sending people abroad for training. Most linguists themselves could be seen and perhaps thought of themselves as recent and temporary migrants to Accra, and did not think of it as their home. Perhaps this was encouraged by the fact that in those days the University of Ghana campus, where virtually all academic staff lived, was definitely outside the urban area, plus the fact that in linguistics (though not other disciplines) none of the young recently trained scholars were Ga, that is, indigenes of Accra. But even if there had been linguists who regarded Accra as fully "home," and despite a perception of Ga as threatened by Akan that goes back to colonial times if not earlier, the Ga were not yet outnumbered in the city to the extent they apparently are now, and the situation might still not have attracted much interest.

To come back to the original motivations and perceptions of the problem: one was to test the hypothesis that the actual composition of multilingual language repertoires was strongly influenced by what part of the country, and particularly what part of the north, one came from,

in other words that not all northern groups behaved alike. This was confirmed by surveys carried out in the 1980s and discussed at some length in my book *Korle Meets the Sea* (Dakubu 1997). Not only that, but (logically enough) the linguistic character of the area of origin seemed to make a difference—in particular, respondents from the area of the ethnically and linguistically complex trading town of Bawku were likely to be significantly more polyglot than people who arrived from a strictly rural environment, either because they brought more languages with them or because they acquired more in Accra, or both (Dakubu 1997; 2000).

Another factor was my perception that most studies of urban sociolinguistics had been based on a rather static model of a multilingual situation. The "triglossia" model, while not without its merits, seemed to project a system in which each language had its functional niche and the possibility of change was either not foreseen, or simply not studied. (see, for example, Abdulaziz-Mkilifi 1972; Johnson 1975; Scotton 1975). How the system got to be that way was taken for granted as obvious. Statistics tended to be based on very limited samples that paid little attention to the kind of sociolinguistic variation in the population that I have just mentioned.

This is why almost all the surveys I have directed are explicitly based on samples, as large as possible, usually well over a hundred, drawn from named language groups—the Buli-speakers, the Dagaare-speakers, and so on identifiable as originating from specific areas within Ghana or beyond. The exceptions to these patterns have been market surveys and household surveys of people living in Ga neighborhoods, which were intended to find out what other languages Ga people and those most closely associated with them spoke, and whether Ga was holding its own or retreating (Dakubu 1981; 2005a; 2005b). The general idea is that urban multilingualism is shaped by a history, which is not just the history of the urban community (to the extent that it can be regarded as a single, if highly differentiated, community) but includes the histories of all the smaller communities that compose it.

A further justification for approaching the topic of urban multilingualism via subcommunities defined by linguistic area of origin is that in the local context this seems perfectly natural. First-generation migrants find their way in the city through their "countrymen" (and women), and for many this remains their most salient community. As I have previously argued (Dakubu 1997; 2005b; and elsewhere), this is the context in which most people approach members of other communities, and within which they use the languages learned.

2.3 Urbanism and the Ga language

Before proceeding further we should consider what we mean by "urban" "urbanization," and "urbanism," in general and with particular reference to language. I suggest we need a finer definition than merely thinking of it as more people in a smaller space. It seems that even among specialists in urban studies it is not easy to define what a city is, and the distinction between urban and rural is often blurred (Eckert 2006: 212). One way is to define them as centers of power relative to the rural hinterland. This could certainly be applied to Accra past and present, but it is not enough. Through much of West Africa south of the savannah where there are nucleated farming villages and chieftaincy systems, there is a hierarchy of royal courts that reaches down to quite small places. In addition an economic definition is useful: towns (as opposed to rural villages) are places where a significant sector of the populace does not get its living directly from food production (agriculture, stock rearing, hunting and gathering, fishing) but can specialize in crafts, commerce, government, and the like as primary occupations and expect to be able to buy its food. The more this is so, the more urban the settlement, and when it is so for the vast majority if not all, it is a real city.

Since we are dealing with language, and language is perhaps the most pervasive marker of ethnicity, we also need a cultural definition. One does not expect ethnic identities to merge completely in an urban environment, especially if most people have moved into the city relatively recently. However a marker of urbanism might be that in this context, ethnic associations are frequently overridden by other kinds of associations, economic and social. One sign of this would be if a particular language is viewed as acceptable for use by all in the urban context, without implications related to ethnicity, and is widely used for this reason.

From this point of view Accra is urban and always has been, if not perhaps quite a "real city," One linguistic test of urban-ness might be whether most people, particularly the young, have an active or only at best a passive knowledge of the registers associated with food production. Do they have to be learned at school if they are not to be lost to urban speakers? Concerning multilingualism, one test would be the extent to which introduced languages are continually reified and "corrected" through contact with the original source area, including maintenance of dialect variation reflecting the pattern in that area, or whether one or more of these languages takes on a life of its own and a distinctive urban variety, perhaps a koiné, arises. Another relates to

attitudes—do both those who identify with a language ethnically and those who do not regard it as indelibly a marker of ethnic identity, or do they think of it as associated with the urban area generally, regardless of ethnicity? In this and the following sections I will discuss the situation with respect to Ga and then with respect to multilingualism in Accra, with reference to these general ideas.

2.3.1 The origins of Ga

The first thing to note is that Accra has been both urban and at least trilingual since it was founded. It first existed as a trading town about 20 miles inland from the shore, where it is thought to have been founded in the fourteenth or fifteenth century, to control the gold trade to the coast. After its ruling clan was conquered by an expanding Akan state (Akwamu) in the seventeenth century, most of it relocated to the coast, where the previously existing settlement had been only a fishing village. The relocation was motivated by the desire to facilitate trade with the European establishments on the coast. The point at issue here is that even in its earlier incarnation Accra was multilingual. The old "Great Accra," as it was called in the European accounts, apparently had Ga, Akwamu, and Obutu quarters, geographically delimited but clearly associated. Akwamu is a southern dialect of Akan, and Obutu was a Guang language, belonging to another branch of the Tano group and so fairly closely related to Akan though far from mutually intelligible with it. It appears that Ga (or proto-Ga) was the language of the ruling clan(s), but that this community had incorporated numbers of other people, and was closely associated with others who may not have been completely assimilated. If Ga ever developed as an urban koiné, it was at this period in its history, not in more modern times.

After the move to the coast Ga became the politically dominant language, to which all migrant groups were expected to assimilate—*Ga* is the name of Accra in Ga—but it is clear that the Ga-speaking community of the newly developing town had roots in all three communities. However the Ga language seems never to have been a language of external relations. Akan in two of its southern dialect forms, Fante of Elmina and Akwamu, was established early as a language of wider communication. The Obutu, a smaller group, were defeated by the Ga and those who were not assimilated were driven to the periphery of the Accra Plain. Its language was thus eliminated from the system, but a European language was added. Commercial Accra has used a European language ever since: Portuguese in the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries, with increasing use of other European languages particularly English until English replaced all others in the nineteenth century and took on

government functions as well. Hausa is the most recent import. It seems to have become established as a lingua franca in the colonial armed forces, headquartered in Cape Coast and then in Accra, fairly late in the nineteenth century.

This history left its mark on the Ga language, indeed it accounts for its very existence. Ga has only one close relative, Dangme. They are not mutually intelligible, although clearly closely related. Together they occupy the Accra Plain. The best estimate seems to be that they represent a series of immigrations from the north and east beginning perhaps a thousand years ago, and that the Ga people of today's Accra linguistically represent what was originally a group of Dangme speakers that assimilated a proportionally large number of Guang and perhaps Akan speakers, before they arrived on the Accra Plain or afterwards or both, since Guang groups also seem to have been moving at the time. The structural differences between Ga and Dangme are such as to lead us to believe that the Ga language must have originated as a Dangme dialect that was radically reshaped by a community of mainly L2 speakers, many of whom maintained their earlier language even after the shift to Ga as the dominant community language. It probably took shape in the old inland town, moved down to the beach and then spread eastwards, reaching its present limits early in the twentieth century.

2.3.2 Structural features

Does the Ga language have any linguistic traits that mark it as urban? The initial development of the language as a kind of creolized Dangme certainly did not involve simplification—its nominal system is morphologically more complicated than that of the (mainly) more conservative Dangme, and its verb system eliminated one kind of complication but introduced another. The changes involved elaboration of the verb paradigm in such a way as to make the Ga verb system more like those of Akan and especially southern Guang languages. Its phonology however, while not unchanged, remains distinctly un-Akan and un-Tano.

One feature that exercises Ga speakers is the variability of the plural forms of some nouns. Two different plural suffixes, /-i/ or /j̃ĩ/ accompanied by changes in the stem, seem to be in competition, and Ga often accuse L2 speakers or recently assimilated speakers of spreading the second at the expense of the first. However it is conclusively demonstrable that this kind of variation in noun plurals has existed since the eighteenth century (Dakubu 1996). It cannot therefore be attributed to destabilization of the language in the modern urban context, although it may well have begun that way—there is no obvious way of determining it.

In the course of absorbing Akan speakers, and in reaction to the highly successful Akan war organization, Ga expanded its vocabulary considerably by acquiring a very large number of loan words, possibly more than Dangme did, which underwent similar influences but has never been urban to the same degree. Most of them are from Akan or from various European languages, first Portuguese, then Dutch and Danish, some Hausa, now English—but many of these words have been borrowed throughout the area, to deal with new culture items, very few of which are really limited to urban areas. Most recently it is noticeable that the command of vocabulary and structure among the educated youth has contracted, but it is debatable whether this is a direct effect of urbanism as such, or indirectly, of endangerment by English.

2.3.3 Sociolinguistic consequences of the urban situation

The sociolinguistic consequences of the urban environment are more apparent. Its situation at the seat of political and economic power is undoubtedly the reason either direct or indirect that Ga spread eastwards after the seventeenth century, mainly at the expense of Dangme. Ga Mashi, the original "unexploded" Accra, is still the focal point from which innovations spread. An example is the use of a plural suffix /-i/ on distributive verbs, especially reduplicated ones. This was new and regarded as a "corruption" in the 1960s, but is now universal.

At least during the twentieth century, Ga youth have used slang registers which I doubt could exist in the same way in a strictly rural setting, since they seem to mark a kind of social autonomy of young men. Today Ga slang is related to street trading and the language of the streets generally and is entirely urban in reference. It incorporates much from English and other languages, but is regarded even by older men as a way of speaking Ga.

Like other peoples of the area, the Ga use a formal procedure to conduct meetings or even personal visits that involves greetings, newsgiving, libation pouring, and so on. The Ga procedure seems to be particularly highly elaborated, even more than that of the Akan which it most closely resembles (Dakubu 1981; 1987). Although its declared function is to integrate outsiders, it also emphasizes differences, including differences of language, insisting for example that everything said must be relayed in the language of the outsiders if it is not Ga, whether or not they understand Ga. The subtext is that outsiders are welcome, but on Ga terms. I suggest therefore that it can be viewed as a strategy for integrating the group by establishing distance as one of the premises of the interaction. It has been said that maintenance of distance is an important urban concern, a way in which the dominant group maintains its power

(Eckert 2006: 213). The extra elaboration of the form for conducting inter-group relations at all levels is perhaps a response on the part of the Ga to the need to maintain their position as they gradually became outnumbered on their own territory.

2.4 Urbanism and multilingualism

In this section I consider whether there is anything about the configuration of multilingualism in Accra that is distinctively urban. In West Africa, widespread knowledge of one or more second languages *by a majority* is I think usually urban, especially if, as is the case in Accra, it extends throughout the society, including both sexes and all economic levels. This does not exist in primarily food-producing settlements, especially non-nucleated settlement areas, even though L2 is taught in schools, and even though because the population is highly mobile virtually every small village has at least one bilingual person.

2.4.1 Structural consequences for the imported languages

In the Accra environment, it might be expected that any or all of Hausa, Akan, and English would develop new varieties that are specific to Accra and not to be identified with any geographically defined dialect, although some dialects may have a greater input into the koiné than others. At present very little is known about this. In the case of Akan, the opinion has recently been aired that people who have lived in Accra a long time, and especially children of Akan-speaking parents who were born in Accra, speak the language differently. Just what the difference consists of is currently unknown, but a few people are investigating it.

The kind of Hausa used as a "northern" inter-community language, and a target of shift by some, is clearly a product of the vehicular Hausa that has been spoken westwards (and possibly south) of Hausaland at least since the latter part of the nineteenth century (Dakubu 1997). Its most obvious features, such as fricativization of velar stops before front vowels, are not due to Akan influence, as one might assume from the Ghanaian point of view, because it has been a feature of the vehicular Hausa spoken in Togo and Benin for a long time. Other than that, nothing at all is known about it.

Varieties of English used in Ghana, both educated and not, have been described by several scholars (Criper 1971; Dako 2003; Huber 1998), but only slight attention has been paid to the question of whether there is a distinctively Accra variety that cuts across ethnic boundaries, or whether the English of people of different linguistic backgrounds is

marked only by their personal linguistic histories (including level of education) and features common to the English of Ghanaians generally. I would assume that a popular English could only arise in an urban situation. Whether a distinctively Accra popular English can be discerned will be one measure of the ethnic integration of the city.

2.4.2 Sociolinguistic features

It seems to me that what distinguishes an urban center like Accra from other towns in Ghana is the existence of languages that are adopted specifically because they have no implications for ethnic identity, and because of that, little or at least much reduced political salience. They are therefore available for use by people of any origin to use with people of any other origin, with minimum anxiety. In Accra, Hausa and English are the languages available for such use. It is true that Hausa is vaguely associated by southerners with northerners and Islam, but not with any particular group of northerners. It is also true that in the past there was a stigma attached to it, originally apparently because it was the language of the colonial police, later because northerners were associated with menial work. However, I have the impression that this attitude is much less prevalent than it was, and it does not exist among the speakers themselves, who regard it as politically and ethnically neutral, but associate it with town life.

The above is definitely not true of Akan. It is possible that it is spreading as a lingua franca, but it is by no means ethnically "neutral" except to Akans themselves, and I believe it is still the most widely spoken language essentially because the Akans are the most numerous group. I would like to discuss a recent survey, conducted in October–November 2005, that lends some support to this view. It represents a relatively young group, and also relatively well educated, certainly above the national average. Akan people were particularly but not exclusively targeted. A little over half the respondents (total 143) were interviewed at random in shops and in the street, mainly around Makola market in downtown Accra. The rest were interviewed or filled out their own interview form in various middle-class suburbs of Accra.[3] A brief linguistic profile of this population is given in Table 2.1. Ewe is included because it had the third largest number of L1 speakers.

One interesting thing about this is that while virtually everybody in this population spoke Akan, English came in at a close second, although it was almost nobody's L1. Hausa was spoken almost exclusively by the few non-southern respondents. The position of Ga at around a third tallies with what has been found in earlier surveys of other groups. Another interesting aspect of the study is that when asked whether they

Table 2.1 Accra survey 2005

Major L1s		Major L2s	
Akan	53.8%	Akan	56.7%
Ga	14.0%	Ga	30.8%
English	4.9%	English	89.2%
Hausa	0.7%	Hausa	7.7%
Ewe	13.3%	Ewe	12.0%

Note: Obviously some who speak Akan as L1 must have reported it again (although a few might be Twi speakers reporting Fante or vice versa).

Table 2.2 Second languages of Gurene speakers in Accra Survey, 2004

	Maamobi and staff village	Maamobi only
Akan	91%	87.8%
English	90%	86.4%
Hausa	79%	92.4%
Ga	41%	28.8%

thought there should be one language that all Ghanaians should be able to speak, and if so which, only 35.7 percent (51) thought everyone should speak Akan, and of those 35 or 63.6 percent gave Akan as their "mother tongue" (language of ethnic identity). Support for Akan as a more or less officially endorsed language therefore is very low among non-Akans, and it appears that for the Akan themselves who are resident in Accra, their language still carries a strong element of ethnic marking.

A self-administered survey of 108 Arts and Sciences students in the University of Ghana carried out during the same period produced similar results, except that a somewhat lower percentage, 42 percent, gave Akan as their L1, a figure probably closer to the national one. Virtually all these students spoke Akan, all spoke English, and about a third spoke Ga, with knowledge of Hausa at around 5 percent. Since most of these students are not Accra residents, the pattern appears to be typical of the educated population at large.

Hausa as a language of the city is limited to a particular sector, although a large one, that was not captured in these surveys. On the other hand there is evidence that migrants of northern origin are still learning it. Another survey was done in June 2004 among Gurene-speaking migrants originating from the Upper East Region around Bolgatanga living in a mixed northern suburb of Accra, Maamobi, and Legon Staff Village. The results were as in Table 2.2.

In Maamobi, which has many northern migrants from many different places, knowledge of Hausa was particularly high, and knowledge of other languages somewhat reduced, although still quite high. Since the total sample size was rather small the differences among Akan, English, and Hausa in Maamobi are probably not significant. The higher figure for Ga in the Staff Village group (one-third of the total sample) was undoubtedly due to the relatively large number of Ga people who live there.

2.5 Conclusions

Whether or not urbanism is a necessary condition for multilingualism, or inevitably leads to it, all urban areas of Ghana are undoubtedly to some extent multilingual, or at the very least bilingual,[4] but the specific four-language system is characteristic of Accra. As regards Hausa, as stated, it is difficult to see how it could have become established in the way that it has in a non-urban situation. On the other hand, Tamale, the largest town in northern Ghana, is linguistically comparable to Bawku, since it also has a fairly large Hausa colony of long standing. A survey carried out in 2004 showed that unlike the people of the Bawku area in Accra (as reported in Dakubu 1997; 2000), the Dagomba (people from the Tamale area) living in Tema, a planned city about 20 miles east of Accra, do not overwhelmingly speak Hausa. Fulani people living near Tamale do not learn Hausa but Dagbani (the language of the Dagomba). In other words, what language becomes established for what cross-ethnic purpose depends on the historical situation.

Even Akan can be seen to be so firmly established in Accra not just because the Akans are so many but because of a historical conjunction. It is used in commercial situations in other non-Akan parts of the country, but without acquiring such an overwhelming presence. Recall that Akan was in fact present at the founding of Accra and of the Ga language. Akan has been important in Accra for trade and government since pre-colonial times, and the present situation is very largely a continuation of that.

Notes

1 Although, the concept of "indigenous population" in this case turns out to be a bit complicated, as will be indicated.

2 Since the summary report of the 2000 census was published it is often stated that the Akan constitute 47 percent of the population or even higher, with the implication that they are close to being a majority. Such claims are based on a combination of misreading of the report and over-generalization on the part

of that report, which includes speakers of Nzema and its close relatives as well as (apparently) some Guang language speakers in the ethnic grouping "Akan" and its speakers. While these languages are all closely related to the Akan or Twi-Fante-Bono language, and share some ethnographic features, they are neither mutually intelligible with it nor are their cultures identical with Akan culture.

3 The interviews were carried out by Miss Mercy Anane-Frempong, who also distributed the questionnaire schedules to those who filled them out themselves.

4 I am thinking particularly of Kumasi, the second largest city in the country, which is solidly Akan, but also necessarily uses English in important domains.

3 The story of old-urban vernaculars in North Africa

Atiqa Hachimi

3.1 Introduction

Issues of multilingualism and Arabic-French code switching have been given ample attention in North African sociolinguistics (e.g. Abbassi 1977; Bentahila 1983; Bentahila and Davis 1983; 2002; Boucherit 1987; Boumans and Caubet 2000; Caubet 1997; 2002; Grandguillaume 1991; Heath 1989; Lawson-Sako and Sachdev 1996; Sadiqi 2003). My concern in this chapter, however, is not with the relatively well-studied urban phenomenon of Arabic-French mixing, alternation and code switching but rather with the understudied phenomenon of the competition of urban dialects in North Africa: Native varieties of the old-capital urban centers versus the koinéizing varieties of contemporary postcolonial cities.

The goal of the chapter is to examine what has become of the old-urban varieties of North Africa which have defined prestigious linguistic practice in the area for centuries. Is there indeed a decline and even death of old-urban varieties as has been suggested by dialectologists and if so what is driving this decline? What are the old urbanites in North African cities targeting as they change their varieties? Are old-urban varieties in fact succumbing to the modern koinés? What is the status and the social meaning of these varieties? These questions will be addressed by providing a review of the small number of sociolinguistic case studies that exists on old-urban vernaculars. The old-capital cities that are considered are Tunis in Tunisia, Tlemcen in Algeria, and Fez and Rabat in Morocco. My own research, however, looks at old-urbanites in Casablanca rather than in Fez for reasons that will be clear later.

The chapter first lays out the background for the division of North African Arabic varieties into "urban" and "rural" and discusses how rapid social changes in the postcolonial era have disrupted this division. Next it provides case studies of old urban varieties in North Africa and proceeds to the case study of Fessis in Casablanca.

3.2 The rural–urban split in North Africa

Similar to other Arabic varieties, North African vernaculars have long been classified along the sedentary (urban)/Bedouin (rural) dichotomy. While there is a number of linguistic features that differentiate between these varieties (see Versteegh 1997), the iconic difference rests on the realization of Classical Arabic uvular [q] as [ʔ] or [q] in most urban varieties and as [g] in rural or Bedouin varieties.

The rural–urban division harks back to the different waves of Arabicization that reached Berber-speaking North Africa between the seventh and the fifteenth centuries. The first wave came with the Islamic conquest in the seventh and eighth centuries (which affected the Iberian Peninsula as well). It is believed that these early Arabic-speaking settlers were predominantly of the urban stock of the Arabian Peninsula (presumably the Meccans) who brought along urban Arabic varieties (Rosenberger 1998). The linguistic impact of this first wave seems to have been restricted to few cities and not impact the Berber-speaking countryside.

It would take the arrival of the Bedouin tribes of Banu Hilal, Banu Sulaym, and Banu Maʕqil in the eleventh and twelfth centuries for Arabic to spread into rural areas and over a larger territory in North Africa. This second wave, known as the Bedouin or nomadic wave, marks the introduction of Bedouin Arabic varieties into North Africa.

The third wave—or the second wave of urban-speaking migrants—came as a result of the huge influx of Andalusian and Cordoban refugees (Muslims and Jews) who were expelled from Spain after the fall of Granada in 1492—else known as the Reconquista. Accustomed to urban life, these urbanites settled mainly in imperial North African cities (e.g. Fez, Rabat, and Tangiers in Morocco; Tlemcen and Constantine in Algeria; Kairaouan, Tunis, and Bizerte in Tunisia). These refugees brought with them the urban-type dialects spoken in Al-Andalus (Muslim Spain) which seems to have consolidated the pre-existing and genetically related urban dialects (Ferrando 1998).

It is important to bear in mind that Al-Andalus and North Africa have for a very long time constituted a similar political and cultural entity and it would therefore be misleading to overlook the demographic and cultural interchange between them throughout the centuries preceding the Reconquista. In the ninth and tenth centuries Al-Andalus was a major cultural and political center from which innovations were spreading. Heath (2002) notes for instance that in the tenth century this interchange was not restricted to Northern Morocco (Tetouan and Chaouen), as it is commonly believed, but extended along major trade routes from Fez to the Trans-Sahara leading to the spread and dominance of the

urban-type dialect not only on the North but throughout the central plains (Heath 2002: 5). Thus any discussion of North African urban dialects must acknowledge their link to the spoken Arabic in Al-Andalus throughout the centuries (Corriente 1977; Ferrando 1998).

In North African dialectology Bedouin dialects are known as Hilalian dialects, after the name of the tribe Banu Hilal while the urban (sedentary) dialects are known as pre-Hilalian. Recently some scholars have argued that "non-Hilalian" captures better the chronological as well as the genetic relationship between the first and second urban waves and distinguishes them from the Bedouin or Hilalian varieties (Lévy 2002). Ferrando (1998) reminds us, however, that despite their differences both Hilalian and non-Hilalian dialects share features that are characteristic of Western Arabic dialects (e.g. the use of plural prefixal pronoun *n-* for first person singular) as opposed to Eastern Arabic dialects.

In recent years scholars have started to draw attention to the inadequacy of the rural–urban split in contemporary North Africa (e.g. Caubet 1998; Messaoudi 2001) arguing that it reflects the sociolinguistic realities of pre-colonial Morocco. In the postcolonial era, however, the split fails to capture the emergence of new urban koinés where cross-fertilization between rural and urban features is underway.

One of the immediate consequences of rapid urbanization, mass education and intense rural migration to North African cities has been the disruption of the rural–urban dichotomy that once dominated dialects and identities. Geographical and social mobility have created a new sociolinguistic urban context quite different from the old urban model of the imperial cities. Thus, a trichotomy was suggested at the typological level in order to capture the differences between the urban dialects that are spoken in old urban centers by the traditional urban elite, known in French as "usage citadin" which I am referring to here "old-urban," the koinéizing varieties in contemporary cities, called "usage urbain" which I call "new-urban" or "urban koiné" and rural varieties spoken by rurals in the hinterland or by rural migrants to the city known as "usage rurale" (Messaoudi 2000).

3.3 Case studies of old-urban varieties in the old capital cities of North Africa

The old capital cities of North Africa (e.g. Tlemcen, Fez, Tangiers) have seen significant political and demographic renewals after independence from the French in the second half of the twentieth century. The general agreement among traditional dialectologists is that the old-urban dialects spoken in these cities are declining and some are on the brink of death. It is also commonly said that they have been generally preserved among

old illiterate women. In the following sections we shall review previous case studies from four old capital cities in North Africa, namely Tunis, Tlemcen, Rabat and Fez.

3.3.1 Tunis

Tunis, the capital of Tunisia, provides an excellent example of the decline of an old-urban vernacular. A community linguistic shift is reported in Trabelsi (1988; 1991) who found that men of all ages have shifted away from the old urban [aw] and [ay] to adopt the modern monophthongs [u:] and [i:], women on the other hand are found to vary across generations. Thus, while older women use their typical diphthongs, the younger women (35 years and younger) have shifted to the monophthongs typical of men's speech. Interestingly, the middle-aged women vary between the diphthongs and the monophthongs depending on their interlocutor. In other words, middle-age women use the diphthongs when speaking with the older women and use the monophthongs when interacting with younger people; a classic example of the Audience Design framework in style shifting (Bell 1984). Trabelsi explains this community linguistic shift away from older urban features and towards the modern urban koiné features as an outcome of women's access to men's domains and also to the decline of the old-city elite and culture. Jabeur (1987; 1996) also notes in reference to the same variable and others that the speech of young urban men and women in Tunis has become similar attributing this shift to an ongoing transition from a patriarchal society into a more egalitarian society in Tunisia. As we will see in the case of young Fessi women in Casablanca, access to male domains does not necessarily lead to the adoption of the modern koiné.

3.3.2 Tlemcen

The case of the old-urban variety of Tlemcen, a Western town in Algeria, presents us with rather different results. While age seems to be the deciding factor in the loss of old-urban features in Tunis, gender seems to be the overriding factor in Tlemcen. Focusing on the variable (q) in particular, Dendane (1994) shows that Tlemcen native women tend to be conservative and maintain the glottal stop [ʔ] while Tlemcen native men tend to drop the glottal stop in favor of the rural variant [g] particularly in intergroup settings. The fact that these men are able to avoid [ʔ] on the phonological, morphological, and lexical levels with non-native Tlemcenis yet continue using it with family and friends is evidence of their advanced bidialectism. An important question of theoretical

relevance is why native Tlemceni men, who constitute the majority in the city, switch to the rural variety of the rural new comers. One would expect the reverse to be true as shown in studies of dialect contact and change elsewhere. It turns out however that force is not in numbers but rather in the gendered conceptions and indexical meanings of the iconic [ʔ]. Dendane notes that in Algeria in general, Tlemceni speech is often perceived to be an "effeminate" variety and native Tlemceni speakers are subject to ridicule and derision particularly for their use of the idiosyncratic [ʔ]. While this seems to be a strong enough reason for men to avoid this feature and use rural [g], women (who happen to be between 16 and 20 years of age), on the other hand, do not feel to be under any pressure to change their dialect since being feminine is desirable for women. It is therefore in response to the pressure of gender-appropriate behavior that a gendered pattern is found in the old-urban variety of Tlemcen. This study makes clear that dialectologists' generalization that old-urban features are preserved only among old and illiterate women does not hold in Tlemcen since it is found among schoolgirls the majority of whom do not seem to be swayed to shift to the urban koiné.

3.3.3 Rabat and Fez

Shifting attention to Morocco's old capital urban centers and their dialects, particularly Rabat and Fez, studies show similar patterns to the other North African old-urban dialects. The decline of old Rabati, the dialect of the population of Andalusian origin residing in the Medina of Rabat, the capital of Morocco, has been reported in Messaoudi (1998). This study's main goal is to document features of this old-urban dialect because of the fast rate at which it is dying out. While the study does not provide a variationist analysis per se Messaoudi makes the important observation that age is an important factor in that speakers of old-urban extractions who are born before 1960s (before independence) are more likely to have an old-urban pronunciation (e.g. the slightly affricated [qħ] and [ʔ] as realizations of (q)). Younger speakers, on the other hand, seem to have abandoned such old-Rabati features in favor of the urban koiné forms. Age here is obviously a proxy for the demographic and social changes that have taken place since independence; chief among these is intense rural migration, urbanization, and mass education which have reconfigured basic social and cultural relationships in the city. The serious decline of old-Rabati features is the result of the loosening of the once tightly knit old-Rabati social networks as a result of intermarriage and diverse other alliances with non-Rabatis.

An earlier study of the old-urban dialect of Fez by Hillili (1979), shows that the Fessi glottal and emphatic realization [ʔˁ] of (q) is starting to disappear among young Fessis. In fact this feature is currently found among older speakers only. Unlike other Arabic dialects in which [q] has been re-introduced through a series of lexical borrowings from the standard dialect without actually replacing each and every word with [ʔ] with [q], as in Cairo for instance (see Haeri 1997), in the Fessi dialect there was a total shift to [q] among young educated Fessis. What is taking place in Fessi speech is a restitution of the old sound [q] across the board among young educated speakers leading Hillili to argue for the influence of Standard Arabic that these youngsters are exposed to in school. Furthermore, Hillili shows that young Fessi males shy away from the non-trilled articulation of Fessi [ɹ] particularly among their peers. This tendency among the men, like in Tlemcen, has to do with the gendered social evaluations of the idiosyncratic Fessi [ɹ] which non-Fessis regard as indexing both "softness" and "bourgeoisie". The non-trilled pronunciation of [ɹ] has the danger of casting the speaker as "soft" that is, less virile and less masculine, and seems to be a motivating factor for men to avoid it. Hillili further observes that Fessi girls, more than boys, are encouraged to maintain Fessi features in their speech because of the positive social values and prestige they carry for females. In fact, Hillili reports the case of rural migrant women who have settled in the Medina (inner city) of Fez and were trying to emulate the speech of the majority of old-urbanite Fessi elite families who were concentrated in the Medina at the time. These rural migrant women try to approximate Fessi [ɹ] in order to sound urban and sophisticated but miss the target and end up using [ʁ] instead. This study shows that in the late 1970s Fessi speech was prestigious for native Fessi women as well as for the rural migrants.

In a relatively recent qualitative study Caubet (1998) looked at language use among three generations in Fez; a "mixed" couple, their parents and their children. The wife comes from a Fessi family while her husband is descendant from rural migrants to the city of Fez. Caubet reports marked differences between the speech of the older generations: the husband's parents maintain rural features [g] while the Fessi mother maintains the emphatic [ʔˁ] as well as several other Fessi features (see Hillili [1979] and Caubet [1998] for a comprehensive list). More importantly, Caubet found that the young Fessi woman erases as much old-urban features from her speech as do the husband and his sister who are of rural parents leading her to conclude that the Fessi dialect is no longer seen as the dominant norm in Fez, even to a young woman. Caubet explains these changes by the influence of the media and school

and the influence of a forming koiné, which bears the blueprints of mixed speech of urbanized rurals.

These two studies on Fez, although not variationist à la Labov, offer us a glimpse of some of the changes that have taken place in a 20-year lapse time. Hillili's study, which was undertaken in the late 1970s, found that the process of decline of old-urban Fessi features has already started among men at least in intergroup settings but 20 years later Caubet's study shows that her young Fessi woman is catching up.

Since the overwhelming majority of old-urban Fessi families have moved to Casablanca, Morocco's economic capital and by far the largest city in North Africa, starting in the early half of the twentieth century but intensifying after independence. I opted therefore to study the Fessis in Casablanca rather than in Fez.

3.4 Case study of the old-urban variety of Fez in the new city of Casablanca

A fuller treatment of dialect leveling and maintenance among Fessis in Casablanca, particularly among Fessi women, can be found in Hachimi (2005). That study shows how and why (non)accommodation to Casablancan linguistic forms takes place among Fessi women by integrating linguistic, socio-cultural, and attitudinal perspectives. I will briefly present here the methodology, the linguistic variables as well as the major findings from that study.

The data come from participant observation and in-depth ethnographic interviews that I carried out with migrant and Casablanca-born Fessis during a 14-month period of fieldwork in the years 1999–2000 in Casablanca. As shown in Table 3.1, the migrant generation (first-generation Fessis) is represented by seven women who have lived in Casablanca for at least 17 years. All are born to Fessi parents except for two speakers who have non-Fessi mothers (Hayat has a Berber mother and Nadia has a French mother). The Casablanca-born Fessis (second and third generation) are born to Fessi parents in Casablanca (except for one speaker, Ihsan, whose mother is a French-speaking Berber). They are represented by eight women; five from the second generation and three from the third generation. All 15 women come from well-established Fessi families, like Berrada, Bouzouba, Smires, Bennani, BenJelloun, Belamlih among others. Socioeconomically, they can all be classified as upper middle class in Morocco. This is not surprising since the predominant majority of migrant Fessis to Casablanca come from the Fessi bourgeoisie. The Fessis are the third largest ethno-regional group in Casablanca after the Ruralites (the largest group which explains the

Table 3.1 Speakers by generation and age

Migrant Fessis	**Casablanca-Born**	**Fessis**
1st generation	*2nd generation*	*3rd generation*
Fatima (70+ years)	Saida (56 years)	Fatma (26 years)
Leila (61)	Khadija (29)	Zakia (24)
Hayat (50)	Ihsan (28)	Lamia (22)
Amina (45)	Siham (24)	
Keltoum (41)	Kawtar (21)	
Samia (39)		
Nadia (36)		

predominance of rural features in Casablanca) and the Berbers (Soussis) the second largest group.

All women are educated except for Fatima (the oldest informant in the study) who did not receive any formal education either in Arabic or French. Her case is similar to that of most Moroccan women her age, since access to education for women did not start until the 1940s in Morocco.

In order to identify the interplay between linguistic and nonlinguistic factors in processes of dialect contact, I combined qualitative and quantitative methodologies, since a combination of these methods generates the most descriptively and theoretically adequate analyses.

3.4.1 The linguistic variables

Fessi dialect has identifiable features that set it apart from the Casablancan dialect on all linguistic levels (phonological, morphological, lexical and morphosyntactic). Three linguistic variables are examined in order to assess Fessi women's leveling or maintenance of old-urban forms: two phonological variables (r) and (q); and one morphosyntactic variable (-i).

3.4.1.1 (r)

Trilled alveolar [r] is the variant used in Casablanca and the predominant variant in most Moroccan Arabic dialects. Non-trilled [ɹ], on the other hand, is an idiosyncratic feature of Fessi speech. It is highly stereotyped and well above the level of social awareness. This was quite obvious through dialect performance and overt commentary during participant observation and during the interviews I conducted with Fessis and non-Fessis in Casablanca and in other parts of Morocco.

The outcome of contact between Fessi [ɹ] and Casablancan [r] has produced three groups of speakers: (1) maintainers of Fessi [ɹ]; (2) adopters of Casablancan [r]; and (3) users of intermediate [ř]; a "fudge" form (Trudgill 1986). There are no linguistic constraints on the adoption of trilled [r] or the maintenance of Fessi [ɹ] since some women use one form or the other categorically. The fact that some women maintain Fessi [ɹ], which is both a minority form and a highly stereotypical trait of Fessi speech, does not lend support to theories of dialect leveling, which predict that a form like [ɹ] would usually be lost in dialect contact (Trudgill 1986).

Examination of the social constraints on leveling and/or maintenance reveals an intimate interaction between age of exposure and social network. Overall findings show that trilled [r] is harder to learn and produce and this is evidenced by the fact that Fessis who maintain the approximant were not able to trill the [r] when I asked them to produce it as part of an imitation task. It seems that after a certain age speakers cannot trill the [r] even if they wish to do so. This indicates that a relatively late exposure to trilled [r], which maybe the result of having Fessi-speaking caretakers during formative years, and a tight-knit Fessi network are instrumental in the maintenance of the Fessi approximant. For both maintainers and adopters the age and network factors are reinforced by social attitudes and group identity (cf. Hachimi 2005).

3.4.1.2 (q)

The variable (q) and its most common reflexes [ʔ], [q] and [g] distinguish urban from rural dialects in almost all Arabic-speaking communities. In MA, however, this is only one aspect of *qaf* alternation. In addition to being two realizations of the same variable that mark rural–urban variation, [g] and [q] can be two separate phonemes, for example, *barqia* "telegram" versus *bargia* "brunette." Furthermore, [g] in MA can also be a reflex of an etymological */ʒ/, for example, *gləs* "sit," in which case it is pronounced as [g] in both urban and rural dialects. Thus, only those instances where [q] and [g] show actual variation are taken into account. Note that although this alternation constitutes only 7 percent of the lexicon in MA (Moumine 1990), it is well above the level of social awareness. Unlike non-trilled [r], however, the Fessi variants [q] and [ʔˤ] are not idiosyncratic of Fessi speech. Other Northern Moroccan dialects such as those spoken in Tangier, Tetouan, and Chefchaouen are also part of the *ʔa:l/qa:l* dialects.

The (q) variable reveals a different pattern of adoption and maintenance than (r). The main finding is that, except for the verb (qa:l)

"to say," all speakers maintain the Fessi variant [q] in all lexical items where variation between [q] and [g] is possible in the Casablancan variety such as [gbəl] "before," [tˁrig] "street," [srəg] "steal," and several other lexical items. Speakers are thus divided into categorical users of Fessi [ʔa:l] or [qa:l] (the old and modern Fessi variants, respectively), categorical users of Casablancan [ga:l] and speakers who vary between [qa:l] and [ga:l].

3.4.1.3 (-i)

Neutralizing the distinction between masculine and feminine in the second person singular, either in the pronominal system or the verbal conjugation, is a feature of urban varieties in North Africa. In the Fessi dialect, the female is addressed in the masculine both in the imperative and the imperfective and bears zero suffix. Casablancan dialect, like other rural dialects in North Africa, is conservative toward second person singular gender marking. It distinguishes feminine and masculine in suffixed pronouns in imperfective and imperative aspects by distinguishing the feminine with [-i]. It is important to note that the variation between Fessi gender neutralization and Casablancan gender distinction is not as salient as the phonological variables.

Unlike the (qa:l) and (r) variables, the majority of informants maintain Fessi gender neutralization including those native to Casablanca. In fact no woman in this study has shown categorical use of gender distinction as they did for example with [r] and [ga:l]. It is not surprising that those who maintain the highly salient Fessi [ɹ] and [qa:l] also maintain gender neutralization. What is rather surprising is the maintenance of Fessi gender neutralization by Casablanca-born Fessis who are trilling [r] and using [ga:l]. I suggest in Hachimi (2005) that linguistic regularization of gender neutralization is the potential linguistic factor responsible for the wider retention of the Fessi morphosyntactic variant. The process of regularization has to do with generalization of gender neutralization changes attested in the possessive and object clitic system to subject clitics. However, no matter how strong internal-language factors may be, social and social–psychological factors do sometimes take precedence. The desire to accommodate and be understood by others counteracts linguistic pressures (Hachimi 2007).

3.4.2 Discussion

3.4.2.1 The migrant generation

It is clear from Figure 3.1 that among the migrant generation, three women (Samia, Amina, and Fatima) maintain all Fessi variants under

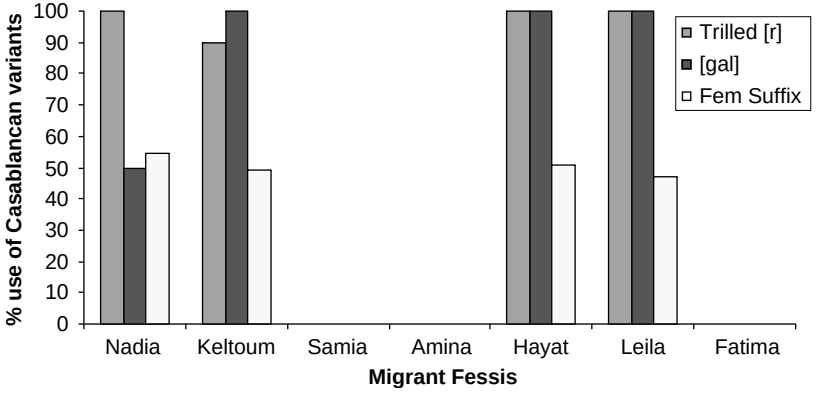

Figure 3.1 Frequency of use of Casablancan variants by migrant Fessis

investigation (i.e. non-trilled [ɹ], [ʔˤa:l]/[qa:l] and neutralize gender distinction) while the remaining four women have shown changes toward the Casablancan variants. They use trilled [r] and [ga:l] almost categorically and the feminine suffix [-i] about 50 percent of the time—a change that is more advanced than Casablanca-born Fessis. It is important to note that these changes are attested not only in intergroup contexts but in intragroup contexts as well. In other words, Fessis are using these features with their Fessi kin and in family interactions; which suggests that the linguistic changes observed are in fact permanent and not instances of short term accommodation.

In order to understand the stark differences between these migrant women we will consider their age of arrival and number of years in the city, their social networks and their attitudes toward the Fessi and Casablancan variants as well as self- and group-identification as these have been shown to be important criteria for understanding migrants' acquisition of the dominant variety in the city.

Fatima, who has been in Casablanca for over 20 years, did not lose any of her old-urban Fessi linguistic traits. What is even more interesting is that she left the city of Fez at the age of 12 upon her marriage to a wealthy Fessi merchant in Khenifra (a small town that shares with Casablanca the same rural features) where she spent a little over 30 years before moving to Casablanca. How did she manage to maintain her old Fessi features (e.g. her use of [ʔˤ] across the board) despite a first migration to Khenifra and a later one to Casablanca? In Fatima's case, the age of migration and the number of years she's been in either Khenifra or

Casablanca, which have been shown to have an impact on dialect change, are not of major importance. What has helped maintain her intact old Fessi speech is her exclusive Fessi social network. This should come as no surprise since Fatima has led the life of seclusion as was customary among aristocratic women in Morocco. Even today, she has minimal contact with the outside world of Casablanca and claims not to understand nor be understood by many Casablancans.

Similar to Fatima, the highly educated, mobile and relatively younger Amina (45 years old) and Samia (39 years old) also categorically maintain all Fessi features without the slightest tendency to accommodate the Casablancan variants. A tightly knit Fessi network cannot be the reason why their dialect has not undergone any changes. Amina is a business owner and a previous high school French teacher whereas Samia is a bank director. Both women migrated to Casablanca in their early 20s and have lived there for more than 17 years. Clearly, the nature of their jobs imposes contact and interaction with non-Fessis on a daily basis. It is worth mentioning that the two women still maintain close contacts with their extended families in Fez and that their circle of friends in Casablanca is predominantly Fessi but this is true also for the Fessi women who have moved away from the stereotypical old-urban Fessi features. The main factor that stands out is their uncompromising subjective reactions toward the supremacy of being Fessi and speaking in a way that indexes their Fessiness. These women embrace a "pure Fessi" identity insisting that it is an asset since it indexes "politeness," "softness," "sing-song quality"; criteria that are important in the construction of ideal femininity in Morocco. A Fessi way of speaking is also a symbolic resource for sounding upper class and urbane. These women recall the sophisticated old-urban Andalusian lifestyle which they claim non-Fessis cannot emulate regardless of their education, wealth, and residence in a city.

These women confirm the widely held beliefs that Fessis will not accommodate to "ʕrubi" speech (e.g. Abbassi 1977) because of its presumed "rurality," "masculinity," and "roughness" (Moumine 1995). Originally the term *ʕrubi* referred to the descendants of the Bedouin Arab tribes that settled in the neighboring Atlantic plains of Chaouia, Doukkala and Chiadma, and LHaouz, where Greater Casablanca is now located but the term today has come to include "unworldly" or "uncultured" behavior or persons.

Yet, we have four migrant Fessi women who categorically adopt the presumably "ʕrubi" variants [ga:l] and [r] and use the feminine suffix half of the time in their speech. Understanding why they behave differently from the first three women requires that we examine their age of migration and their attitudes.

While Hayat and Leila came as adults, Nadia and Keltoum came to Casablanca as teenagers, yet they all acquire Casablancan features to the same degree. This suggests that the first two women changed their way of speaking later on in life whereas the ones who arrived as teenagers might have acquired them at an age where peer pressure may have been important in influencing them to leave behind old-urban features. Note that the underlying assumption here is that women had all Fessi features before coming to Casablanca. The only way of knowing what their speech sounded like is from what they revealed during the interviews and informal chats. Keltoum (who is Fatima's daughter—the oldest speaker who maintains even [ʔˤ]) has this to say about the changes in her speech particularly in regards to [r].

Keltoum: ʒit llәhna ħraʃit, bidˤawija *pure* . . . ħraʃit faʃ ʒit lCasa. Hdˤәrti wllat ħәrʃa, *le r* wәlla ħrәʃ . . . ra daba wllat tatsәrreħ-li ra

Keltoum: I came here I became tough, pure Casablancan. Everything about me has become tough when I came to Casablanca. My dialect has become tough too. My r has become tough. Now my r has become straight.

This suggests that Keltoum did in fact have an old-urban pronunciation before coming to Casablanca, which is not in itself surprising since she has an old-urban speaking mother and care taker. But it is important to remember that she was born and raised in Khenifra which could have facilitated her loss of Fessi features.

What these women seem to have in common is ambivalent attitudes toward "Fessi" and "Casablancan" speech and their reaction to these varieties is highly nuanced. "Pure Fessi" is *tqil* "slow," "unintelligible," and "out of the ordinary" but "polite" and ʕrubi-Casablancan is "vulgar" and "rough/tough" (except for Keltoum who finds certain ʕrubi expressions to be funny and charming). What they seem to prefer is *ʕa:di'* "normal" speech. When asked what they mean by "normal," the women define it, each in her own way, as neither Fessi nor ʕrubi. In other words, they refer to a leveled variety free of stereotypical Fessi and rural-Casablancan features.

These four women were also very critical of the elitist attitudes "pure Fessis" have toward other social groups. Leila, Keltoum, and Hayat were reluctant to identify as "pure" Fessis. These women, however, do not reject Fessi identity altogether but seem to embrace it when it came to certain cultural practices such as cooking, dressing, arranging a bride's trousseau, and so on, which are staples of the urbane Fessi cultural heritage. On the other hand, Hayat did not identify as Fessi despite

the fact that she is fond of Fessi lifestyle and savoir vivre. This is perhaps due to how other Fessis perceive her since her father is Fessi but her mother is Berber. She made it clear during the interview when talking about her life history that she was known in her extended family as *bənt ʃəlħa* "the daughter of the Berber." She seems to accept this assigned identity and therefore self identify as Berber. Finally, Nadia, who is from a Fessi father and a French mother, rejects a Fessi identity altogether and thinks that Fessis of Fez "still live in the 13th century." Most of her expressed attitudes about the Fessi dialect and about Fessis in general seem to be on the negative side. Yet she is the only one who retains the Fessi variant [qa:l] half of the time in her speech. Because [qa:l] is not idiosyncratic of Fessi speech, it does not seem that it has the same significance as the approximant and other stereotypical variants.

3.4.2.2 Casablanca-born Fessis

With the exception of Ihsan, the other Casablanca-born Fessis have shifted almost categorically away from Fessi [qa:l] and [ɹ]. The age factor does not seem to matter among this group since Saida who is 55 years old has abandoned Fessi features whereas Ihsan, a 28 year old, maintains all Fessi variants as shown in Figure 3.2. In addition, Kawtar (21 years) and Siham (24 years) are lagging far behind in their adoption of trilled [r]. They are however using the fudge or intermediate form [ɾ] rather than the stereotypical approximant [ɹ].

The fact that Ihsan who is born, raised, attended school in Casablanca and has never lived anywhere else, is no guarantee that a Fessi speaker will accommodate to the Casablancan dialect. Her consistent use of Fessi variants provides further evidence that being native of Casablanca does not necessarily guarantee that a Fessi woman would leave behind stereotypical Fessi features. Ihsan is by no means the only Casablanca-born Fessi who maintains stereotypical Fessi features. During my several gatherings with these informants, their families and friends, many young Fessis maintain Fessi [ɹ], [qa:l] as well as gender neutralization among several others variants.

Ihsan seems to hold the same views and attitudes as the three women from the first generation who consider being Fessi a great asset for a woman. Yet, she takes great care in distinguishing herself from "pure Fessis," who she thinks are "naïve, spoiled, snobbish and too delicate," insisting instead that she is *ħərʃa* a "tough" woman. The question that follows, therefore, is why all Fessi women regardless of age and generation maintain the [q] variant in all other lexical items where variation between [q] and [g] is possible in the Casablancan variety but they vary with respect to the verb (qa:l) in particular?

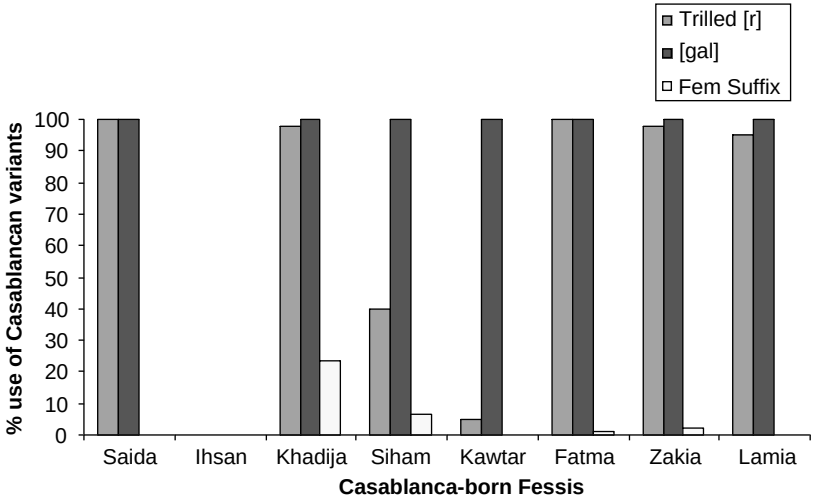

Figure 3.2 Frequency of use of Casablancan variants by Casablanca-born Fessis

The answer to these questions lies in the social meanings encoded in [qa:l] on the one hand and in [ga:l] on the other. Based on women's comments it appears that there is a clear boundary between [qa:l] users and [ga:l] users. Most of these women are unwilling to identify with [qa:l] users mainly because [qa:l] indexes *F*^{w}*assa d Fez* or "pure Fessi" identity. They emphasize their use of [ga:l] to assert their distance from speaking the Fessi dialect and also to assert that [ga:l] allows them to sound "normal." For instance, Kawtar likes the fact that she maintains non-trilled Fessi [ɹ] because it is very feminine and charming. For her [qa:l] indexes pure Fessiness more so than the variant [ɹ], in fact, she considers "stupid" a Fessi who uses the Fessi variants [ʔ] or [q].

Kawtar: maʃi fasija fasija, *je suis normale* . . . ana ʃwija bidˤawija, *je parle r avec ʁa c'est tout, parce que* lfassijat tajgulu 'qatli qutlək'. . . ana *c'est* 'galli gutlək' dik 'qatli qutlək' *c'est bête*.

Kawtar: I am not Fessi-Fessi, I am normal . . . I am Casablancan a little. I speak with (Fessi) ʁa that's all, because Fessi women say "qatli qutlək". . . Me it's "galli gutlək." That "qatli qutlək" is stupid.

These women employ the most socially significant linguistic resources that readily allow them to sound Casablancan. Saying [ga:l] instead of [qa:l] casts the Fessi speaker as Fessi-Casablancan whereas adopting [g]

in other lexical items beside [ga:l] would mean to sound ʕrubi-Casablancan rather than Casablancan.

The agency of speakers in constructing their own identities (Eckert 2000), is clearly shown in the categories they have used to claim membership in one group or another: "pure Fessis," "Fessi-Casablancans," "pure Casablancans," and "Casablancans." Their linguistic choices give meaning to these categories and are essential in shaping the hybrid Fessi-Casablancan identity most of these women claim. I argue in Hachimi (2007) that sounding "normal", that is, leveling out stereotypical regional traits, becoming "tough," and being "one of the folks, not snob" are important components in thinning out "pure Fessi" identity. These practices may also be considered rites of passage to becoming "Fessi-Casablancan" or "Casablancan."

Findings from this study show that it is the stereotypical old-urban features of Fez that are declining among speakers. Yet as we have seen this is by no means the case for all women. Iconic Fessi features are alive and well among young, highly mobile and highly educated Fessi women, either migrants or native to Casablanca. The ambivalent attitudes shown by Fessi women are a clear testament that while to some women the old urban dialect of Fez does not carry the same prestige it used to enjoy in the past, to others it still does and it is in fact used as a resource in reproducing Fessi identity.

3.5 Conclusions

Several questions were raised at the beginning of this chapter. I shall treat each question as a way of drawing general conclusions from the case studies discussed above.

(1) Is there indeed a decline (and even death) of old-urban varieties as has been suggested by dialectologists and if so what is driving this decline?
The answer is a resounding yes to decline. However, sociolinguistic studies help us define and refine what we mean by "decline" and among which group of speakers loss of old-urban features is taking place. For instance, decline in the old-urban vernacular in Tlemcen seems to be gendered where even the youngest women are holding on to the most idiosyncratic variant of their native Tlemceni speech whereas men seem to avoid it in intergroup settings. In the case of Tunis decline is clear among the younger generation of both men and women but among Fessis in Casablanca, for instance, there is variation in the decline of stereotypical old-urban forms with some women favoring the conservative forms and others favoring the

innovative or the urban koiné forms. However, with respect to the morphosyntactic variant we cannot possibly talk about its decline since it seems to have been preserved and in fact "focused" among Fessis in Casablanca.

(2) What are the old urbanites in North African cities targeting as they change their varieties and are they in fact succumbing to the modern koinés?

Most case studies discussed in this chapter support results from other Arabic sociolinguistic studies that standard Arabic exerts little influence in the path of linguistic change. Among the old-urbanites in North Africa, Classical/Standard Arabic is not the target. In Tlemcen men are shifting away from a non-standard old urban [ʔ] to yet another non-standard feature [g], in Tunis speakers are leaving behind the standard-like diphthongs and targeting the non-standard monophthongs and in Fez some speakers are abandoning the standard-like [qa:l] for rural [ga:l]. The case of younger educated Fessis abandoning the old-urban [ʔˤ] and replacing it with [q] across the board is a case that suggests influence from the standard variety as has been suggested by Hillili. However, I am not sure how we can make the case for [q] but not for other standard variants such as the feminine suffix [-i] for instance. If Fessis are in fact targeting the standard variety they would adopt the standard-like gender distinction (which the dominant variety of Casablanca shares with Classical/Standard Arabic) instead of preserving Fessi gender neutralization. Furthermore, the fact that some women are adopting the non-standard [ga:l] is evidence that the standard variety does not influence linguistic variation and change in the old-urban vernaculars.

(3) What is the status and the indexical meaning of these old-urban varieties in contemporary North Africa?

For centuries, old-urban dialects have acted as badges of old and well-established urban linguistic practice and have defined urbanity in North Africa. Some studies have shown that these vernaculars are still prestigious despite their decline (the case of Fessis in Casablanca and Tlemceni women), other studies have found that they are no longer prestigious enough to be acquired by newcomers (as stated by Caubet's study in Fez). Old-urban speech has also been shown to index "softness" and "effeminacy" which leads men to avoid it particularly in intergroup settings as a strategy to ensure their masculinity (the case of Tlemceni and young Fessi men). It is important to bear in mind that some Fessi women in Casablanca also desire to sound "tough" by avoiding features that

they consider "soft," "too slow," "stupid," and "a relic of the past". I hope that this chapter has problematized the notion "urban" by looking at the two competing local "urban" sociolinguistic models that co-exist in contemporary North Africa.

4 The spread of Lingala as a lingua franca in the Congo Basin

Eyamba G. Bokamba

4.1 Background

The emergence of Lingala as a trade language along the mighty Congo River and its tributaries in remote northwestern Equateur Province in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and its eventual spread as one of the major languages of wider communication (LWC) in much of Central Africa to become an urban language have remained subjects of considerable interest among specialists of Congolese languages. Of central interest in this regard have been three main questions. First, when did Lingala, which is not an ethnic language, develop as a language? Was it before or after the colonization of the Congo by King Leopold II of Belgium? Second, did Lingala evolve as a pidgin from one or more of the languages spoken in the Ubangi-Congo rivers confluences in the Equateur Province? If so, what was or were the primary lexifier(s)? And third, what socio-historical developments facilitated its initial and subsequent spread throughout Central Africa and beyond so as to make it one of the current major LWCs in Africa?

In this study I attempt to address these and related questions with particular attention to the language's spread in its primary zone: DRC and the Republic of the Congo (hereafter Congo-Brazzaville). I begin by situating Lingala relative to other African languages, including the other three national languages of DRC. Lingala is one of the major Bantu languages that comprise the East Benue-Congo sub-branch of the Niger-Congo phylum in Africa (Heine and Nurse 2000; Williamson and Blench 2000). Bantu languages, estimated to number around 500 out of the estimated 1,436 Niger-Congo languages, cover much of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) from Cameroon on the West coast of Africa all the way to South Africa, except for a few pockets of Khoisan languages in Tanzania, South Africa, and Namibia (Heine and Nurse 2000).

Lingala is a Central Bantu language that belongs to what is known in Guthrie's (1948) typological classification as Zone C-32 Bantu languages.

It is spoken as a first and additional language primarily in DRC, the Republic of Congo (Congo-Brazzaville), and in parts of four neighboring central African states: northwestern Angola (including the cities of Luanda and Cabinda), eastern Gabon, southern Central Africa Republic, and southwestern Sudan. And as will be indicated later, Lingala is also spoken in a variety of Congolese enclaves throughout Africa, Europe, and the Americas where Congolese popular music, the "soukous" or "Congolese rumba," is the music of choice that makes everyone dance (Bokula 1983; Dzokanga 1979; Stewart 2000).

Currently there are no reliable statistics on the number of Lingala speakers in its primary region, but estimates range from 20 to 25 million. In DRC where it serves with Kikongo, Kiswahili, and Tshiluba, as a national language, it functions as the dominant or competing lingua franca in four and a half of the eleven provinces: the Equateur Province (northwest) and the capital city of Kinshasa where it is the dominant lingua franca for daily communication; the Bandundu Province (southwest) and the Bas-Congo Province (west) where it competes with Kikongo; and the Orientale Province (east) where it competes with Kiswahili (Bokamba 1976; 2008; Sesep 1986; 1987). During the 1970s and 1980s it penetrated significantly the Kivu Province and became a weak competitor to Kiswahili, the dominant lingua franca in the region. In Congo-Brazzaville, Lingala is the dominant lingua franca in its three major cities: the capital city of Brazzaville, Pointe Noire (west), and Impfondo (northeast). In the first two cities it competes with Kikongo, the dominant lingua franca in that sub-region. With this background, let us consider next the emergence of Lingala initially as a trade language along the tributaries of the Congo River in the west and northwest Equateur Province, to eventually spreading elsewhere in the Congo River basin and beyond.

4.2 The origins of Lingala in multilingual DRC

The evolution of Lingala from a trade language to a LWC in Central Africa and the contact it has had with other Bantu and non-Bantu languages, to which I turn now, is a fascinating story that replicates similar developments that have been reported from elsewhere in the world (Cooper 1982; Greenberg 1965). Consider in this regard, first, the genesis of Lingala.

4.2.1 Genesis of Lingala

Unlike the geneses of most LWCs that are relatively well documented, that of Lingala remains complex and obscure, owing in part to the close

relations between the languages of the sub-region of origin and the lack of documentation on these languages (Hulstaert 1940a). Specifically, the origins of Lingala and the date on which it emerged as a language presumably from a pidgin among speakers of closely related central Bantu languages in the Equateur Province (Hulstaert 1940a; Mumbanza 1973; Motingea 1984) remain a matter of continuing debate among scholars of Congolese languages. There are two main hypotheses. The first, most cited and enduring hypothesis is offered by John Whitehead, a former Baptist missionary who lived and worked with the Bobangi people on the banks of the Ubangi River in the Equateur Province of DRC, west of the city of Mbandaka and on the southern part of the region formed by the confluence of the Ubangi and Congo rivers. On the basis of the many cognates between Lingala and Bobangi that Whitehead uncovered and described in his *Grammar and Dictionary of the Bobangi Language* (1899), he hypothesized that Lingala arose from Bobangi that it replaced as a trade language among Congolese traders along the Ubangi River before it began its expansion through the Congo River up to Kisangani (northeastern DRC). It is unclear from Whitehead (1899) when Lingala evolved as a trade language, and even as a pidginized form of Bobangi. A number of other researchers (e.g. Guthrie 1935, the leading standardizer of Spoken or "Protestant" Lingala, Bwantsa-Kafungu 1970, 1972, and Bokula 1983) have accepted Whitehead's monogenesis hypothesis at face value, evidently unaware of the fact that Bobangi is only one of over a dozen of riverine and closely related Bantu languages (including, e.g. *Baloi*, *Bamwé*, *Bolobo*, *Dzamba*, *Eleku*, *Libinza*, *Liboko Likoka*, *Lobála*, *Mabale*, *Ndobo*, *Ngelé,* etc.) that are spoken at the confluence of the Ubangi and Congo rivers and their tributaries (e.g. the Ngiri and Mongala) in the Equateur Province.

The second hypothesis is advanced by Mumbanza (1971; 1973) who disputes Whitehead's theory, and suggests a probable date for the emergence of Lingala and its lexifiers. Mumbanza maintains that Lingala evolved as a trade language in Mankanza (on the Mongala River) before the arrival of the Belgian colonialist Coquillath who selected it as a trading post that he renamed Nouvelle-Anvers in 1874, and which received its first European settlers in 1880 (Sesep 1986).[1] According to Mumbanza (1973), European traders reportedly settled in Mankanza for at least 10 years (1884–1894) to explore that part of the country, and thus took advantage of the existing trade language, Lingala, for communication, and later spread it beyond the Mankanza sub-region. Mumbanza (1973) also argues against Whitehead's (1899) monogenesis of Lingala: He maintains that Bobangi was certainly one of the parent languages of Lingala, but that many of the riverine languages mentioned above were involved in its development. He is supported in this respect by

Hulstaert (1940a,b), the venerable expert of Lomongo, the regional competitor to Lingala and a related language in the Equateur Province.

The accuracy of Mumbanza's (1971; 1973) hypothesis concerning the onset and lexifier of Lingala is contested by another Congolese language researcher, William Samarin. In a series of studies published in the 1980s and early 1990s, Samarin (1982; 1985; 1990/1991) argues that Lingala developed as a lingua franca from Bobangi in a pidginized form at the time of the colonization of Central Africa in the late nineteenth century. He further states, presumably in support of Whitehead (1899), that Bobangi had been used as the trade language before colonization all the way from the confluence of the Kasai and Congo rivers, about 100 miles north of Kinshasa and Brazzaville, up-river for about 500 miles along both the Ubangi and Congo rivers. His research findings indicate that colonization brought

> [T]housands of African employees who were *not* indigenous to Central Africa. These are the ones, I would like to argue, who had an important role in the creation of Bangala [another name used by some missionary linguists for early Lingala]. It was these foreign workers who had the greatest amount of contact with central Africans. (Samarin 1990/1991: 67)

These conclusions sound reasonable given the sources that Samarin consulted at the Tervuren Museum for Central Africa in Belgium and at other archival facilities in Europe. The information given in these sources, however, must be taken with considerable caution in view of the fact that they are silent on the existence and use of other closely related Bantu languages spoken in a large sub-region served by the Ubangi, Ngiri, and Mongala rivers. In fact, Michael Meeuwis in a number of recent studies (Meeuwis 2001a, b; Meeuwis and Vinck 1999; 2003) that both translate colonial era publications on Lingala published in Flemish, French, and English, and synthesizes them, has come thus far closer than any other Congolese linguistic scholar to answering the key questions of the onset and parent languages (i.e. lexifiers) of Lingala.

After a painstaking review of Emeri Cambier's (1891) *L'Essai sur langue congolaise* (i.e. Lingala), De Boeck's numerous works on Lingala, and those of other early missionary linguists (e.g. Stapleton and Weeks), Meeuwis (2001b) draws three major conclusions: (1) That Lingala evolved initially as a "pidgin" or "simplified" form of "Bobangi" between 1882 and 1884 at the "Bangala Station" that was "[o]ne of the [colonial] state posts founded along the river, outside (north of) the original Bobangi area" in the Equateur Province (Meeuwis 2001b: 149); (2) that the initial lexifier of Lingala was Bobangi from 1882 to 1884, and that thereafter as the pidginized Bobangi expanded beyond its region of

provenance to compete against Bobangi proper that had served as the lingua franca in the confluence of the Congo and Ubangi rivers up to the city of Lisala in northern Equateur Province prior to 1882, it incorporated naturally and via corpus planning by the Scheutist missionaries vocabulary from other languages of the region; and (3), that the name Lingala was given to the language by Mgr. De Boeck after September 1901 to replace a variety of other names (viz. "*la langue du fleuve, la langue du Haut Congo, la langue du Haut-Fleuve, la langue de traite, langue commerciale*," *and* "*Bangala*") by which it was referred (Meeuwis 2001b). Meeuwis (2001b: 152) states that Mgr. De Boeck "coined the name later that year [based on the existing language nomenclatures in the region] as part of a larger process of active linguistic 'intervention' which he and some of his [Scheutist] confreres had decided to set up."

4.2.1.1 Bobangi as the progenitor of Lingala

With respect to the first conclusion, Meeuwis (2001b) maintains, on the basis of his previous attempts at the reconstruction of the history of Lingala (cf. Meeuwis 1999; 2001a; Meeuwis and Vinck 1999), that Bobangi served initially as the trade language along the Congo River from its area of provenance that extended for about 700 km from south at the Kwa River to the confluence of the Congo and Ubangi rivers in the north in Southwest Equateur Province prior to 1882. It subsequently expanded to non-Bobangi speaking areas "as far to the north-east as the present city of Lisala" (Meeuwis 2001b: 147) during that era which presumably preceded H. M. Stanley's exploration of that region of the Congo (1876–1877) on behalf of King Leopold II of Belgium.

This language is reportedly the lingua franca that the European colonialists "and their non-native African troops [encountered when they] left Léopoldville [the future capital of the colony] to begin with the establishment of a colonial state in northward, upstream direction" [on the Congo River and its main tributaries] (Meeuwis 2001b: 148). Meeuwis, drawing on Samarin's (1989) book, maintains that since the Europeans in these expeditions "were not more than a handful" and yet each "was in charge of an army of mercenaries" who had been recruited from Sierra Leone, Guinea Coast, Gold Coast, Zanzibar, and other parts of East Africa, it was mainly these troops who "pidginized" Bobangi between 1882 and 1884 in their daily attempts to communicate with the region's inhabitants. Meeuwis (2001b) characterizes the "pidginization" of Bobangi as a high level of simplification involving, among other features,

> the loss of the [typical] Bantu syntagmatic concord, the extreme reduction of the TAM [i.e., Tense-Aspect Modality] distinctions, and the simplification of the Bobangi verb morphology, using either

> the infinitive or the a- [subject] prefix of the third person singular for all grammatical subjects. (Meeuwis 2001b: 148)

According to Meeuwis (2001b ff), it is precisely this "highly simplified Bobangi" that developed into lingua franca Lingala between 1884 and 1900 initially at the Bangala Station that was established in 1884 near the community of Iboko on the Mongala River, a tributary of the Ngiri River which is in turn the first tributary of the Ubangi River. Back at the beginning of the 1940s Hulstaert (1940a: 38–9) made a similar claim regarding the origin of Lingala when he stated that:

> De fait, l'origine du Lingála remonte aux premiers Européens et leurs auxilliaires africains. Dans la dernière décade du siècle précédent on employait encore très peu le terme 'lingala'; on parlait le 'bobangi' ou 'kibangi', mais déformé et mélangé, se reprochant déjà beaucoup du lingala actuel.

I am not certain that this is a fact, or simply a reconstruction of the evolution of the language that had been undocumented in writing by a people who had been steeped in oral tradition until the introduction of a western-type school by the Scheutist Mission presumably in the mid-1880s.

4.2.1.2 Other lexifiers and "creolization" of Lingala

In support of his second conclusion, Meeuwis (2001a, b) references colonial-era publications which indicate that at this state post, subsequently referred to as Mankanza and renamed Nouvelle-Anvers (New Anvers) in 1890 by the colonialists, Lingala underwent its first and yet most important development phase as it functioned as the lingua franca of a rapidly expanding and major community. The Station comprised a school, army barracks, a Scheutist mission established in 1889, and an orphanage for African children reportedly "liberated from Arab slave traders" in northeast Congo (Meeuwis 2001b: 150). The contact between the speakers of this new lingua franca with other local (e.g. Liboko, Mabale, Boloki) and sub-regional riverine languages such as Baloi, Likila, Libinza, Dzamba, and Likoka offered a second set of lexifiers naturally after the reported initial input by Bobangi, and then via code-elaboration pursued aggressively at the Station by the Scheutist Catholic Mission under the leadership of Mgr. Egide De Boeck, the strongest proponent of Lingala and is most prolific grammarian (Meeuwis 2001a, b). Meeuwis and Vinck (1999) and Meeuwis (2001a, b) characterize the Mission's language planning efforts from 1900 onward as "creolization from above"—that is, top-down planned creolization. Meeuwis (2001b: 151) also claims that "[i]n this period [1884–1900] at Nouvelle-Anvers,

the Bobangi pidgin also acquired its first speakers." These developments presumably stabilized the language to a large extent, and facilitated the adoption of a language policy among the large Scheutist mission in the Equateur Province beyond the confluence of the Ubangi and Congo rivers, as will be discussed in Section 4.3.

In fact, the input of other languages into the development of Lingala was recognized as far back as 1890 by a number of missionary linguists, including Mgrs. Camille Van Ronslé, Egide De Boeck, Walter H. Stapleton, and John H. Weeks. Weeks, for example, made the following observation upon his first visit to the Bangala/Nouvelle-Anvers Station in 1890:

> On the main river there was a mixed language, commonly called among us the "trade language"; [. . .] *There was a large element of Bobangi in it, some Kiswahili words, and a few Lower Congo [i.e. Teke or Kikongo, EGB] words and phrases. This "trade language" has now been supplanted by what is called the "Bangala language," which is a mixture of the languages already mentioned, with a smattering of Bangala [Iboko-Mabale-Boloki] words thrown in* [My emphasis]. For a considerable time Diboko (Nouvelle-Anvers), or [. . .] Bangala, was the largest State station above Stanley Pool [i.e., Léopoldville, EGB]. A large number of natives were imported there from all the tribes on the Upper Congo [i.e., central Equateur and Orientale provinces, EGB], and this heterogeneous mass of humanity [. . .] held communication with each other by means of the "trade language." *The smartest of the natives in the towns adjacent to Diboko quickly learned this jargon, and used it more or less fluently when communicating with the State soldiers and workmen; and the white men hearing the natives of the neighbourhood talking this lingo jumped to the conclusion that it was their own tongue in which they were conversing, and thus called it the Bangala language, and by that name it is now generally known on the Upper Congo.* [My emphasis, EGB] (Cited from Meeuwis 2001a: 330–1)

Weeks' observation is important not only in terms of its confirmation of the polygenesis of Lingala, but also in its suggestion regarding the close affinity between the emergent Lingala and the languages of the immediately surrounding communities to the Bangala Station. The fact that, according to Weeks, "the smartest of the natives in the towns adjacent to Diboko quickly learned this jargon, and used it more or less fluently when communicating with the State soldiers and workmen" implies in part that the new language was very closely related to their own, and in part that they had been exposed to it for a period of time in order to achieve the level of fluency he characterizes. Further, the description of these so-called smartest of the natives as "Bangala" must not have been haphazard, but rather based on a local reality involving

the identification of these people vis-à-vis the non-local and sub-regional inhabitants. The question here is, where did the name Bangala come from?

4.2.1.3 Naming of Lingala

Meeuwis (2001a, b) provides no elaboration of the circumstances or factors, other than the quoted statement, that informed the coining of the term Lingala in 1901. There are certainly antecedents to this practice in African linguistics, including the use of the term "Bantu languages" by W. H. Bleek in 1850 to refer to the largest SSA language family known then variously as the "Alliteral" and "Kaffir" languages. Bleek's use of "Bantu" to refer to these languages was based on the facts that they had a common core vocabulary item to refer to a person/man, viz., *-*ntu*, whose singular was *muntu* "person/man" and the corresponding plural *bantu* "persons/men/people." In this case Bleek, the "father of Bantu linguistics," simply adopted an existing term to cover the family of languages that he was studying. We do not have such an explanation from De Boeck's work, and Meeuwis has evidently not discovered any from other sources.

A very plausible explanation for the source of "Bangála," "Mangála," and "Lingála" is the word *mongálá* "a creek" or "small river that is a tributary of bigger river," with a corresponding plural as *mingálá*, that commonly occur in the closely related languages of the Ubangi-Congo rivers confluence. Traders coming via canoes from different rivers in the area very likely identified themselves as people from or of such and such a *mongálá* upon their arrival in Mankanza. In view of the lack of proficiency in the languages of the region by the first European colonialists and their troops, this term, which also means "a speaker of Lingala," could have been misinterpreted to denote an actual language: Lingala, in view of the fact that most of the languages in the region begin with the noun prefix {li-}: *Liboko*, *Likila*, *Libinza*, *Likoka*, *Lingombe*, and so on. Thus, it would not have taken much effort by Mgr. De Boeck to "coin," as it were, the term Lingala for the Bangala Station's lingua franca.

Another issue that deserves a comment here with regard to the origin and subsequent lexifiers of Lingala is the total absence of the recognition of the common trade practices of the inhabitants of the confluence of the Ubangi-Congo rivers: fishing and farming, and the role that their languages played on the river trade prior and subsequent to the colonization period described above. Hulstaert (1940a) touches on these issues when he argues that the development of a pidgin to serve as trade language at the confluence of the Ubangi and Congo rivers was

unnecessary as the traders' languages were mutually intelligible: They could communicate with each other in their mother tongues without resulting to a pidgin of any type. Specifically, these languages, which include Baloi, Bolobo, Dzamba, Libinza, Likoka, Lobala, Ngele, are mutually intelligible; and most of their speakers are involved, to-date, in riverine and land trade involving the sale of fish, game meats, palm oil, cassava, plantains, bananas, baskets, and so on. Given this interaction, it would have been impossible for the then emerging Lingala to have been influenced only by Bobangi, but not by the above-mentioned languages, among others.

4.2.1.4 Summary

In summary, from all the available studies to-date, it is reasonable to conclude that Bobangi might have been initially the principle lexifier of Lingala for a period of time that remains unknown. However, the frequent interaction between speakers of the above-mentioned languages that characterized pre-colonial and colonial trade on the Congo River and its tributaries in the Equateur Province first and then beyond undoubtedly injected other lexifiers, as argued by Meeuwis (2001a, ff). So, the Bobangi monogenesis hypothesis so often reproduced in much of the literature is untenable both on the basis of the studies and reports from which Meeuwis has attempted to reconstruct the evolution of Lingala, and also on the basis of what is common knowledge by inhabitants of the Equateur, including this author who was born and grew up in the Ubangi-Congo river confluence. In addition to the languages of the Equateur, including Lomongo, the impact of Kikongo on Lingala resulting from the intense and long contact in Kinshasa from the 1930s onward cannot be overlooked in the lexification of Lingala. The first phase of this contact reportedly began in the period 1884–1900 when European colonialists and "high numbers" of their various militia and other personnel who had been working in several posts in the Equateur (e.g. Nouvelle-Anvers, Bolobo, Equateur [rebaptized "Coquilhatville" in 1882], Irebu, Kwamouth, and Lukolela) "were sent to man the growing settlement of Léopoldville" (Meeuwis 2001b: 155) which became the colony's capital city in 1929 (Hulstaert 1946; Polomé 1968).

4.3 Functional allocations of Lingala

Whatever its exact genesis may be, Lingala has been recognized by researchers of Congolese languages as not only the most important of the four national languages of DRC and Congo-Brazzaville, but also arguably the most important lingua franca of Central Africa both in

terms of its estimated demographics and known prestige (e.g. Bokamba 1976; Bokula 1983; Bwantsa-Kafungu 1970; Dzokanga 1979; Kazadi and Nyembwe 1987; Meeuwis 2001a, b). Its importance grew in response to a conjunction of sociohistorical developments from the time of its formation onwards. These included church-missions' and colonial administration's planned language policies, as well as spontaneous developments. I summarize each of these as chronologically as possible to demonstrate the extent to which the process of the spread has been a long and multifarious one, with eventual structural effects as should be expected in language contact situations.

4.3.1 Adoption as a trade lingua franca

Chronologically, the most pivotal development that positioned Lingala to emerge as the most important Congolese language in much of western and northeastern (Belgian) Congo (i.e. from the Equateur southward to the current Bandundu, Kinshasa, and Bas-Congo provinces, and eastward to current Province Orientale) was its spontaneous adoption as the trade lingua franca along the Congo River and its many tributaries in these regions during the pre-1900 period. In this capacity it not only served as the inter-ethnic language of commercial interactions between Congolese along the said riverine routes, but also as the lingua franca between the colonialists, including missionaries, and their personnel and subjects. It is Lingala use in the latter case that Hulstaert (1940a; 1946) criticizes "Europeans" as being mostly responsible for "bastardizing," because they cared more about communicating with their personnel and subjects than about correct Lingala or Bantu grammar.

4.3.2 Nouvelle-Anvers' lingua franca

The second most pivotal development in the spread of Lingala was its adoption as the lingua franca from the "rapidly expanding" Bangala Station that was established in 1884 and renamed Nouvelle-Anvers in 1890 (Meeuwis 2001a, b). According to Meeuwis' study (2001b: 150), the rapid growth of this station to become a center with a school, an army barracks, a Scheutist mission built in 1889, and an orphanage where a large number of African children "liberated from the 'Arab' slave traders operating in the east of the Congo were brought together to be 're-educated'," facilitated the adoption of Lingala as the station's lingua franca. This role of the language in turn necessitated its initial corpus planning (i.e. graphicization and standardization) from 1890 at the station by the Scheutist missionaries under the leadership of two Belgian clergymen: Mgr. Camille Van Ronslé and Mgr. Egide De Boeck

(Meeuwis 2001a, b; Meeuwis and Vinck 1999). They drew on the languages of the immediate region (Liboko, Mabale, Boloki, Baloi, Libinza, etc.) to standardize what they considered to be "a jargon" or "Bobangi pidgin." The resulting initial standardized Lingala was then imposed as the medium of education and worship in the church's mission work at Nouvelle-Anvers, and then later expanded to other mission posts in the Ubangi-Congo rivers' confluence in Equateur among the Lobala, Likoka, and Ngombe speakers, as far as the current city of Lisala.

4.3.3 Scheutist missions' lingua franca

The adoption and initial standardization of Lingala at Nouvelle-Anvers/Mankanza was followed by attempts to spread and impose the standardized variety as a lingua franca of the Scheutist missions outside the primary region to other parts of Equateur and all the way to their missions in northeastern and southwestern Congo. In a meeting held during a long retreat that took place in July 1918 in Nouvelle-Anvers under the leadership of Mgr. Ronslé, the founder of the Mpombu Mission that was subsequently incorporated in the Bangala Station, the attendees agreed with a proposal presented by their leader to take full advantage of the popularity of Lingala, and use it as the most effective medium of evangelization and education in all the Scheutist church missions (Meeuwis and Vinck 1999). At that time the church had mission posts in several sub-regions in much of the Equateur Province, Haut-Congo (currently, Orientale) Province, Léopoldville, and the Bas-Congo Province. While there were dissenting voices that had preferred to use languages local to each sub-region that Mgr. Ronslé's subordinates deemed much more suitable, the resolution was accepted and implemented, thus guaranteeing the spread of Lingala to essentially four provinces through these traditional agencies: education and religion. The implementation was subsequently enforced by edicts that required all priests in any Scheutist mission post to learn the language. The publication of several Lingala books subsequently by Mgr. De Boeck, Mgr. Ronslé's successor and the leading Lingala grammarian at that time, further reinforced the use of the Standard Lingala dialect that he developed (Meeuwis 2001a; Meeuwis and Vinck 1999).

It is worthwhile to point out here that the adoption of this language policy by the Scheutist church, a precursor to what other Catholic denominations were to eventually pursue, was a major development in favor of Lingala not only against other potentially competing regional languages such as Lomongo, Kiswahili, Tshiluba, Kikongo, Kitetela, and Zande, but also because the Scheutist church had one of the largest educational systems in the Congo. Hence, it ensured the spread and

continued code-elaboration of Lingala. This message was not lost on Mgr. A. De Clercq of the Bamanya Jesuit Mission (near Mbandaka, in the Equateur Province), who reportedly complained that the imposition of "purified Lingala," which he considered as an "artificial and a European" creation rather than a true indigenous language, in education and evangelism was unwarranted (Hulstaert 1940a). He, presumably along with his colleague Mgr. Gustave Hulstaert, the leading scholar of Lomongo and reported opponent of Lingala, advocated the use of Lomongo in the Jesuit missions in much of Equateur for these domains of their church's work. This was done in several sub-regions of Equateur, including Mbandaka and Bamanya, where varieties of Lomongo are spoken; but the spread of Lingala, as will be discussed further below, could not be stopped. Lomongo would eventually be overtaken by Lingala on its home-turf.

4.3.4 Capital city's lingua franca

The fourth development was the adoption of Lingala in 1929 by the Belgian Congo's colonial administration as the lingua franca for the city of Kinshasa (ex-Léopoldville), and therefore of marketplaces, when the city became the colony's capital. This policy was in recognition of the use of Lingala as a LWC in the city by two critical groups of colonial state's employees: "high numbers of African personnel trained in the schools and army barracks of Nouvelle-Anvers [who] were sent to man the growing settlement of Léopoldville" during the 1884–1900 period, and "the vast majority of European state personnel" who went to work in the city then and who had only learned Lingala (Hulstaert 1946; Meeuwis 2001b: 155). This was, from the perspective of language competition and particularly that of linguae francae, a major development in favor of Lingala as it essentially relegated to second role what was then the dominant local language: Kikongo.

4.3.5 Adoption as security forces' official language

The fifth factor in this seemingly rapid spread of Lingala was its adoption in 1930 as the colonial army, *La Force Publique*'s, official language throughout the colony. This initial policy was evidently informed by the dominance of Lingala-speaking militiamen and other state personnel in the army at that time (Hulstaert 1946; Meeuwis 2001b; Polomé 1968), as indicated in Section 4.3.4. The policy remained in force throughout the colonial period, maintained after the advent of political independence on June 30, 1960, and was extended to the rest of the security forces, viz., the National Police Force and Military Police

(*Gendarmerie*) that were established thereafter. Security forces', especially the army's, broadcast on the radio was carried out in Lingala nationwide, and thus provided the language an additional instrument of spread that was unavailable to the other linguae francae.

4.3.6 Symbolic power

A sixth contributing factor in Lingala's spread after independence was the increase in its symbolic power at the national level as a result of the inclusion of at least seven Lingala-speaking politicians as top officials in different ministries and major sub-departments in a series of national governments in the first republic (1960–1965), beginning with that of Patrice Lumumba (as Premier Minister) and Joseph Kasa-Vubu (President). These individuals who came from different Lingala-speaking provinces such as Equateur, Kinshasa, Orientale, and parts of Bandundu and Bas-Congo, included P. M. Lumumba (Province Orientale), Joseph D. Mobutu (l'Equateur) as Chief of the national army (ANC), Justin Bomboko (Equateur) as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Paul Boliya (Equateur) as Vice Minister for Interior Affairs, Victor Nendaka (Equateur) as Director of National Security, and Cyrille Adoula (Equateur) as Prime Minister (1961–1963). These officials, including President Kasa-Vubu (a former Catholic priest who came from the Bas-Congo Province, a predominantly Kikongo-speaking region), often addressed the population in Lingala both in mass rallies in Kinshasa and on the national radio, hence increasing the popularity of the language (Bokamba 1976; Sesep 1978). P. M. Lumumba's famous speech on the national radio in 1961 in response to his dismissal by President Kasa-Vubu, for example, was given in Lingala (personal witness, but see also Heinz and Donnay 1966; Van Lierde 1963).

4.3.7 In-migration to Kinshasa

The exodus of rural inhabitants into Kinshasa and other predominantly Lingala-speaking cities in DRC and in Congo-Brazzaville after independence represents the seventh factor that facilitated Lingala's spread. It greatly increased the number of Lingala speakers as those individuals had to learn it as the urban lingua franca in order to function in these centers. For example, in-city migrants to Kinshasa where Lingala had established itself firmly as the dominant lingua franca, and similarly in Brazzaville, and Mbandaka, had to acquire some proficiency in the language in order to function daily. Of Kinshasa, the capital city of DRC and the country's megapolis with an estimated 8.5 million inhabitants, Bokula (1983) makes several observation that deserve to be cited fully

because of their importance in the role that this particular policy has come to play in the language's expansion nationwide. According to Bokula (1983: 13),

> Depuis quelques années, le linagla s'est imposé dans la ville de Kinshasa. Cette implantation est favorable à son expansion et à son imprégnation à l'intérieur du pays. . . . chaque année, des milliers de zairois régionaux vont, pour diverses raisons, à Kinshasa où ils sont imprégnés du lingala qu'ils doivent parler dans leur vie quotidienne. La capitale zairoise devient ainsi le centre le plus important pour l'extension de la langue lingala. On est tenté de croire maintenant que, dans l'immédiat, la "guerre linguistique" entre le kikongo et le lingala n'aura plu lieu à Kinshasa; car le lingala a vaincu le kikongo qui, il y a une trentaine d'années, était considéré comme un concurrent sérieux.
>
> Les habitants de Kinshasa (ou kinois) ont adopté le lingala comme langue seconde à fonction essentiellement véhiculaire. Pour les jeunes, le lingala est devenu la langue principale qu'on parle aussi bien dans la rue qu'à la maison.

Bokula's observations are independently supported by other scholars of Congolese languages and the developments described below.

4.3.8 Language of Congolese music

The use of Lingala as the dominant language of the ever-popular Congolese music whose lyrics are known and danced throughout DRC and beyond, constitutes the eighth factor and perhaps the third most important one nationwide after the language's adoption as a lingua franca by the Scheutist mission and the Congolese security forces. The enduring expansion of Congolese music in the 1950s and then its explosive development from the 1960s onward under a variety of names (e.g. Congolese rumba, soukous, kwasa-kwasa, ndombolo) to become the music of choice among Africans, and Africanist Europeans and North Americans, combined with other Lingala entertainment and educational programs on the national radio and television in DRC (i.e. RTNC, RENAPEC, etc.) have favored its expansion not only within the surrounding central African countries mentioned above (viz. Congo-Brazzaville, Gabon, Central African Republic, Rwanda, and Burundi), but also beyond them in Africa itself and to the rest of the world. This association of the language with Congolese pop music, whose birthplace is DRC with Congo-Brazzaville as the first offspring site, has had a tremendous impact not only in the spread of the language per se in the two Congos as a potential pan-Congolese language, but also in facilitating its learning naturalistically from such music as an additional

language by devotees of this music in central, eastern, and southern African countries.

It is worthwhile to point out here that as it is generally known among Congolese intellectuals of the late 1950s and early 1960s generations, Congolese musicians such as Wendo, Kabasele, Franco (also known under his authenticity name of Luambo Makiadi), and Rochereau (Tabu Ley), among others, trained other African musicians from various countries in the greater central African region: Angola, the Congo, Gabon, the Cameroon, Central African Republic, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Kenya, and Zambia. This training facilitated early on (ca. 1957 onward) the spread of Lingala that is estimated to account for at least 70 percent of the contents of Congolese music (Bokamba 1976; Bwantsa-Kafungu 1970), hence contributing to its reputation as "the most sung African language" (Dzokanga 1979: 7). The emigration of some Congolese musical groups to East Africa (esp. Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, and Kenya) during the civil wars in DRC in the 1960s, combined with the migration in the 1980s and 1990s of prominent singers (such as the late Franco, Rochereau, Kanda Bongo Man, Mbilia Bel) to West Africa, Europe, and America for politico-economic reasons, has implanted Congolese music and its main language (Lingala) in an unparalleled fashion in these regions. This inter-African migration has created enclaves of Lingala speakers in most of these countries. Further, the broadcasting of Congolese music on radio services in numerous countries within and outside of Africa (e.g. Abidjan, Bangui, Brazzaville, Brussels, Cairo, Dar-Es-Salaam, Harare, Johannesburg, Lagos, Luanda, Nairobi, Port Harcourt, Paris (France Inter.), Urbana-Champaign (WEFT Radio Station), Washington, D.C. (Voice of America), Yaoundé, etc.) has enhanced considerably the prestige of both the music and its language, and has thereby expanded the number of their imitators as well as admirers (Bwantsa-Kafungu 1970: 6).

4.3.9 Official language of the Catholic Diocese of Kinshasa

The ninth and perhaps one of the most pivotal developments in the evolution of Lingala as an urban lingua franca, was its adoption on June 20, 1966 as the language of the clergy and thereby of worship for the Catholic diocese of Kinshasa (Bwantsa-Kafungu 1970; 1972; Bokamba 1976). This policy complements and extends that of the Scheutist catholic mission discussed in Section 4.3.3. It was an extremely significant piece of ecclesiastical legislation not only because the Catholic diocese of Kinshasa is the largest in DRC, but also the most influential and the headquarter of this denomination in a country that is estimated to consist of 50 percent Catholics and 30 percent Protestants (including

10 percent Kimbanguist). This legislation requires each trained Catholic clergy, at least those expected to work in Kinshasa, to achieve proficiency in Lingala in order to use it in worship service and their interactions with the parishioners.

4.3.10 Lingala in other public domains

The last factor in the popularization of Lingala includes its use in additional public domains: (1) the late president Mobutu's government's policy of rotating functionaries, especially provincial governors, to all its regions throughout the country and thus forcing them to learn the national languages, including Lingala; (2) President Mobutu's practice of addressing the people, both in mass rallies and on the National Radio and TV station (*La Voix du Zaire*) in Lingala; (3) the use of Lingala then, like the other national languages (viz., Kikongo, Kiswahili, and Tshiluba), as the medium of instruction in K-3 in its regions of dominance, as well as its teaching as a subject at all levels of the school curriculum and university systems; (4) its use as the language for the written media (e.g. in periodicals such as *Likembe*, *Bibi*, *Kongo ya Sika* (renamed *Zaire ya Sika* in 1974), and newspapers such as *Mambenga*) during the first (1960–1965) and much of the second republic up to around 1988; and (5) its high frequency use in RTNC popular programming such as soap operas, plays, and advertisements (Bokula 1983; Bokamba 2008; Bwantsa-Kafungu 1970; 1972; Dzokanga 1979; Kazadi and Nyembwe 1987).

4.3.11 Summary

To sum up this section, the importance of Lingala is well established within and outside of Africa. Dzokanga (1979: 7) aptly and succinctly summarizes its diffusion and importance when he states,

> Aujourd'hui le lingala est répandu dans toute l'Afrique, au moins d'une certaine façon, et même dans le monde entier. Il dépasse de loin les limites des territoires où il est implanté. Actuellement on peut dire qu'il a une audience mondiale d'importance comparable au swahili. Il est enseigné dans beaucoup d'universités d'Afrique, d'Europe et d'Amérique. Il est sans doute la langue la plus chantée d'Afrique: ses chants et ses disques sont partout.

Another Congolese author, Bokula, writing 4 years later, makes even stronger claims about the language by stating,

> En quelques décennies, le lingala s'est imposé comme langue véhiculaire de contact entre zairois. On peut dire que cette langue est en droit de revendiquer une place de choix parmi les grandes langues

> interafricaines à cause de l'intérêt que lui accordent les nombreux locuteurs zairois et étrangers.
>
> Certains linguistes le pointent déjà comme le futur "zairois" qu'on adoptera facilement comme langue nationale officielle en considération du fait que divers facteurs, linguistiques et extra-linguistiques, contribuent à son expansion au Zaire et ailleurs. C'est cette réflexion que nous résumons dans la première partie [du livre] intitulée *communauté lingalaphone*. (Bokula 1983: 1)

This expansion and reputation will undoubtedly continue in the future, especially when DRC's economic and political situations are stabilized, and its immense resources are developed. The past socio-historical developments that have privileged its expansion and sustained it thus far will likely maintain this momentum under improved economic, educational, and political conditions.

What emerges from the different functional allocations of Lingala in DRC particularly is that it is the leading major competitor to French, the official language; and that it is also the de facto indigenous national language which in significant respects defines Congolese nationalism via its predominant role in Congolese music and official functions in major national institutions such as the security forces and the Catholic church (Bokamba 2008). This prominence subjects it to variations resulting from the intense and ongoing contact with other Bantu and non-Bantu languages in Central Africa to which I now turn briefly.

4.4 An overview of variation in Lingala

As would be expected in any history of the expansion of a language, especially in a highly multilingual environment, the birth and eventual spread of Lingala chronicled above has exacerbated its variation from the constituent languages' grammars. In this section I highlight the major variants and their characteristics, with a focus on the Standard Lingala that is also known as Mankanza Lingala and Lingala *littéraire*. The reader is referred to Bokamba (1993) for a detailed discussion of these variations.

4.4.1 Overview of standard Lingala/Lingala littéraire

As discussed in Sections 4.2.1.1–4.2.1.2 above, Lingala evolved from Bobangi and several other closely related Central Bantu languages of the Ubangi-Congo confluence, and spread out of the region via different agencies throughout much of DRC. These Ubangi-Congo region Bantu languages are characterized by the usual robust agglutinative morphology of the Bantu language family. Two core features of this characteristic

are the marking of nouns into a morphological noun class system involving the pairing of such nouns into singular and plural on the basis of prefixes, and the occurrence of a series of grammatical agreement forms on verbs and modifiers that these nouns trigger. The standardized Lingala dialect that De Boeck and his colleagues developed in the mid-1880s reflected these characteristics. Lingala's expansion to other parts of DRC before and after the corpus planning, however, brought the language into contact with many other languages among the estimated 214 indigenous Bantu and non-Bantu languages, plus French, that are spoken in the country (Gordon 2005). As a result, it underwent numerous variations and changes (Bokamba 1993). Like any other LWC, this contact has resulted in the development of several dialects or varieties that include the following:

(1) **Standard Lingala** ("Lingála littéraire")
(2) **Spoken Lingala** ("Lingála parlé")
(3) **Kinshasa Lingala** ("Lingála de Kinshasa")
(4) **Brazzaville Lingala** ("Lingála de Brazzaville")
(5) **Mangála** (a somewhat mutually unintelligible variety spoken in northern and northeastern Orientale province—the Uele District)
(6) "**Indoubill**" (a highly code-mixed Lingala spoken by youths in Kinshasa).

The variations and changes have occurred at all levels of grammar: phonetics/phonology, morphology, lexicon, and syntax. For example, the Standard and Spoken Lingala dialects exhibit the full range of contrastive seven-vowel system (viz., [**a, e, î, i, o, ì, u**]): the occurrence of the tense-lax vowel harmony rule that converts non-high vowels to [**î**] and [**ì**] when either of these lax vowels occurs in a root; the occurrence of the full range of morphological noun classes (viz., 13) and the grammatical agreement patterns that they entail on verbs and modifiers; the occurrence of the full range of tense-aspects (viz., progressive, present completive, immediate past/imperfective, simple past, remote past, and future); and the occurrence of at least two types of relative clauses (Bokamba 1981; 1993; Bokamba and Bokamba 2004).

4.4.2 Kinshasa and Brazzaville Lingala[2]

In contrast, the Kinshasa and Brazzaville Lingala dialects, while they contain all the above-mentioned seven vowels, only five (i.e. [**a, e, i, o, u**]) are contrastive. Additional characteristics include the loss of the vowel harmony rule; the tendency to merge [u] onto [o]; the occurrence of double noun prefixes involving the overgeneralization of the human noun plural prefix {ba-} to all other noun classes (e.g. *ba-mi-nkanda*

instead of *mi-nkanda* "books"); the dramatic reduction of the subject prefixes from thirteen to seven to encode only human class subjects singular and plural, and everything else; the complete eradication of the adjectival or nominal agreement system; the occurrence of paratactic relative clauses; the conflation of the simple past into the immediate past/imperfective; the occurrence of abundant KiTuba or "KiKongo ya Leta" (in DRC) or Monokutuba (in Brazzaville) loanwords; and the denasalization of word-initial consonant clusters before voiceless consonants (e.g. *pasi* instead of *mpasi* "pain," *sango* versus *nsango* "news/information") (Bokamba 1977; 1993; Bokamba and Bokamba 2004). Over and above these variations, both Kinshasa and Brazzaville Lingala are characterized by a high incidence of code-mixing involving principally French and Lingala, and to a limited extent Kikongo and Lingala.

4.4.3 Mangála and Indoubill dialects

Documentation of Mangála is extremely limited, and therefore very little is known about its main differences with the other varieties. But according to the few descriptive studies that appeared in the 1920s and a recent doctoral thesis published in 2002 by Atibakwa Edema, the dialect is widely spoken in the Uele sub-regions in northern and northeastern Oriental Province.

Indoubill or the Lingala slang spoken by adolescents and secondary school students mainly in Kinshasa, also has not been studied; but it is frequently heard in the school playgrounds, streets and shops, and serves as a defining characteristic of a Kinshasa adolescent and youth. Structurally, Indoubill contains a large amount of loanwords from various foreign languages (including French, Spanish, and more recently, English); there is a drastic reduction of the grammatical agreement just like in KL; and tense/aspects as well as nouns are frequently found in suppletive forms (e.g. *na-z-olia* instead of *na-zal-i ko-lia* "I am eating," and *zele wana* instead of *mademoiselle wana* "that miss/girl").

4.5 Conclusion

4.5.1 Findings

As stated at the beginning of this study, the genesis of Lingala and the circumstances of its spread in Central Africa, especially in what is referred to as the Congo River Basin, have been subjects of ongoing debate among specialists of Congolese languages. In this paper I sought to answer these questions through a careful and critical examination of available studies. Three main conclusions have emerged from the

analysis presented above. First, Lingala emerged from its humble beginnings in the rural community of Mankanza in Central Equateur Province apparently in the mid-1800s presumably between 1866 and 1882. The actual date remains indeterminate due to lack of documentation on the history of the sub-region before 1880. The vast majority of the available published literature on the topic, however, seems to situate the onset of the language in the period between 1882 and 1900 that corresponds with the establishment of the Mankanza or Nouvelle-Anvers Station on the Mongala River. If this is correct, then the language emerged as "Lingala," rather than something that could be "lingua franca Bobangi," during the initial period of the European so-called "exploration" of the sub-region for eventual colonization by King Leopold II. But if this hypothesis is incorrect, as Mumbanza's (1971; 1973) and Motingea's (1984) works suggest, then we will have to assume that the language's development pre-dates the advent of Europeans in the region, and that its "remarkable" presence in the Mankanza/Nouvelle-Anvers Station was merely a phase of its growth in an organized community with literate observers. Under this perspective what was referred to as "pidginized Bobangi" could have been a code-mixed Lingala with a preponderance of Bobangi words complemented by that from the other closely related languages (Liboko, Mabale, Libinza, Dzamba, Likila, Likoka, etc.).

Second, contrary to the often-cited monogenesis hypothesis proposed by Whitehead (1899), it is evident from Meeuwis' (2001a, b) and Meeuwis and Vinck's (1999) reconstructed history of Lingala from a variety of published and archival documents that Lingala has many lexifiers, of which Bobangi is the principal complemented by the above-mentioned languages. Unlike Bobangi that Whitehead documented, most of the other languages were not committed to writing during the period in question here, hence the lack of their recognition as lexifiers by Whitehead and later writers. As observed in Section 4.2, however, the riverine commercial interactions of the inhabitants of the Ubangi-Congo rivers inhabitants and the language contact that this activity entailed then were constants; as a result, borrowings must be assumed to have occurred.

Third and finally, the spread of Lingala to have become the leading lingua franca in DRC and Congo-Brazzaville and the primary language of the ever-popular Congolese music to which much of the Africanist world dances resulted from a variety of interrelated sociohistorical developments that began at the Congo River trade routes, were reshaped at the Mankanza Station, and then crescendoed with the colonization activities discussed above. Religion, education, trade, military occupation (in this case the stationing of security forces, whose official language is Lingala, in all provinces), and music have emerged in this process as the characteristic traditional agents discussed in the language spread

literature. As in any spreading language, the ecological factors that have facilitated this expansion have also had a tremendous impact on Lingala's internal structure, resulting in planned and unplanned variations at all levels of its grammar as discussed briefly in Section 4.4. The absence of standardizing agencies such as a regulative or normative institution (e.g. à l'Académie française) and Lingala publishing press will likely continue to exacerbate these variations through the pervasive oral tradition.

4.5.2 Theoretical implications

The spread of Lingala described in this study is consistent with most of the findings in the literature elsewhere (see e.g. the case of English). In this respect this study supports, independently and largely, the findings in the literature. What emerges here perhaps as distinct and worthy of further investigation is the extent to which the closeness of the lexifying languages have obscured the identification of the different source languages, and how the felicitous conjunction of this close genetic relation between the lexifying languages and riverine business privileged the spread of Lingala over its potential competitor in the adjacent province: Kikongo in the former Bas Congo Province. The implications of this study are that language spread is a much more complex and non-linear phenomenon than it has generally been portrayed in that it does not simply involve the acquisition of the spreading language and variety/(ies) thereof by additional speakers (Cooper 1982), but also how the different agents interact in the spread process within given language ecologies. The pivotal agents and sociohistorical developments identified in this study appear to have formed a relatively unique network that not only launched the language's spread, but also maintained it against various odds.

Notes

1 It is worthwhile to interject here, however, that according to Motingea (1984), the initial contact between the European colonizers/explorers with the inhabitants of the old Mankanza territory and the riverine people of the Ubangi river occurred from 1866, with the related people of the Dzamba, Likoka, and Lobala starting in 1906.

2 I am indebted to Dr. Félix Ungina NDOMA of the University of Kinshasa for some of the data on Kinshasa Lingala (KL).

5 Senegal's early cities and the making of an urban language

Fiona Mc Laughlin

5.1 Introduction

In contemporary urban Senegal, and especially in the nation's sprawling capital, Dakar, the predominant language is urban Wolof, a Niger-Congo language that exhibits intensive lexical borrowing from French. Urban Wolof is a language variety that has come into being from sustained contact between Wolof and French, the language of the former colonial power in Senegal, for over three hundred years. Although Senegal is a highly multilingual society where more than twenty-five languages are spoken, Wolof has assumed the informal role of national language, and is often referred to as such by those who speak it, despite the fact that French is the sole official language. Attitudes toward the pre-eminent role of Wolof in Senegal vary from group to group, with ideological opposition coming primarily from the highly multilingual region of Casamance in southern Senegal, and from the Haalpulaar or Pulaar (Fula) speakers who are concentrated in the northern part of the country as well as Dakar. Despite the resentment of these groups toward the dominant role that Wolof plays on the national scene, the language continues to thrive and its numbers of speakers continue to increase. Although only approximately forty percent of the Senegalese population are ethnically Wolof, close to ninety percent of the national population and perhaps as much as ninety-six percent of the Dakar population speak Wolof as a first or second language (Cissé 2005). Through a long historical process the language has attained a dominance disproportionate to its ethnic constituency and has thus become a major lingua franca.

The rural and urban dialects of Wolof differ from each other in several ways, but the most salient distinction is that in urban areas Wolof can be considered a contact language, having borrowed significantly from French, whereas rural dialects exhibit few French loans. Extensive lexical borrowing of this sort often opens the door to other types of structural change in the morphology and syntax (Winford 2003), but the structural changes that have gone on in urban Wolof as the result of

contact with French are subtle ones, which have not yet significantly changed the morphological or syntactic structure of Wolof. Within a framework such as Myers-Scotton's (1993b) Matrix Language Frame model, urban Wolof can be described as a variety in which Wolof is the matrix language which supplies the overall morphological and syntactic structure of the language, and French the embedded language which supplies certain lexical items. Urban Wolof is illustrated in the following examples.[1] French borrowings are in boldface.

(1) Mën naa bind ci olof nit **lire** ko **comprendre**
can 1sPERF write in Wolof people read it understand
"I can write in Wolof and people can read it and understand."

(2) **Arbitre** bi **siffler**-na
referee DET whistle-3sPERF
"The referee has blown the whistle."

(3) **Facilement** mën na la **orienter**
easily can 3sPERF 2s orient
"It can easily orient you."

(4) **Bon**, yàgg naa ci bokk, **mais dans la pratique**, mangi
well last 1sPERF in belong but in the practice 1sPRES
ci sooga dugg **il y a deux mois**.
in just enter ago two months
"Well, I've been a member for a long time, but in practice, I just joined two months ago."

These examples reveal the texture of urban Wolof which has been described variously as code-switching (Meechan and Poplack 1995), unmarked code-switching (Myers-Scotton 1993: 124), and code-mixing (Swigart 1992). Although each of the examples in (1)–(4) could potentially be classified within a typology of contact phenomena, I prefer to bypass this type of classification because the language itself is a highly variable one that differs significantly from speaker to speaker with regard to the intensity of French borrowings, and it would be difficult, if not impossible, to characterize urban Wolof as any single type of language mixing. Although many of its speakers are aware that their language is characterized by extensive borrowing from French, they are not necessarily able to isolate those French loans or identify them in their own speech. And even for speakers of urban Wolof who also speak French and who, in reflecting on their speech, are able to identify French borrowings, they do not experience the use of such borrowings as a switch in language. Observations such as this have lead certain researchers (Spitulnik 1999; Woolard 1999) to adopt a speaker-based approach to language contact phenomena rather than an externally

imposed classification, an approach that I believe is better suited to the study of urban Wolof.

As I have shown elsewhere (Mc Laughlin 2008a), urban Wolof is a much older language than is commonly assumed in the literature. There is strong evidence from Descemet (1864) and Faidherbe (1864) that it was a robust variety in the mid-nineteenth century, and there is compelling historical evidence to indicate that an urban variety may have emerged in the late eighteenth century or even earlier. My goal in this chapter is to consider the possibility that urban Wolof, by which I mean a variety of the language that exhibits significant borrowing from French, came into being at the same time as Senegal's early cities. The cities in question are the Atlantic island cities of Gorée and Saint-Louis where the French first established commercial outposts before expanding their operations to the continental mainland of Africa.

Gorée is an island off the coast of the Cape Verde peninsula, three kilometers from Dakar. Originally of interest to the Portuguese and the Dutch, Gorée had become a French *comptoir* or commercial outpost by the mid-eighteenth century after being disputed by the French and British for a number of years. Saint-Louis du Sénégal is a small island located in the Senegal River, not far from the mouth. The westward flowing Senegal River that forms much of the border between Senegal and its northern neighbor, Mauritania, turns southward just before it gets to the Atlantic, so that it is separated from the ocean by only a thin strip of land known in French as the Langue de Barbarie (Tongue of Barbary) which continues south for 20 kilometers or so to the sea. Dakar, the current capital of Senegal, on the other hand, is a much younger city and did not come into being until 1857. Although Dakar has been and continues to be the site of new developments in urban Wolof, it is the older island cities of Gorée and Saint-Louis that were home to the emergence of this variety of the language.

5.2 Language attitudes: a key to the past

The linguistic counterbalance to urban Wolof is a rural variety that exhibits far fewer borrowings from French and which is known in urban Wolof as *olof piir*, "pure Wolof," from the French word *pur* "pure." These two varieties, and especially the ways they are conceived of within the Senegalese linguistic imaginary, are the poles between which language ideologies and language attitudes are played out. Attitudes toward urban Wolof are complex and often seemingly contradictory since they can be simultaneously positive and negative. Urban Wolof enjoys enormous covert prestige as the language of the city and hence

the language associated with modernity and the opportunities that urban life is perceived to offer. Those who move into the city from rural areas quickly learn the urban variety as part of what Mbembe (1997) has termed "urban knowledge" since speaking a rural dialect, namely *olof piir*, and following the pragmatic norms of rural verbal interaction would mark them as yokels. On the other hand, many of the critiques of modern urban life and a certain nostalgia for a simpler, bucolic village life are conveniently channeled through negative attitudes toward urban Wolof. The fact that urban Wolof is characterized by extensive borrowing from French is taken as sentimental evidence of a culture that has become unloosed from its origins and is viewed as being somehow inauthentic. As a hybrid language that is mixed with French it is also symbolic of a profound cultural and linguistic alienation, evidenced in particular by native speakers of other languages who are quick to point out that certain words have been lost in Wolof and have to be borrowed from French. Perhaps the most direct mapping of the problems of urban life onto attitudes toward urban Wolof comes from a 30-year-old disc jockey I interviewed in 2005 who maintained that the pace of life in Dakar was so fast that people simply didn't have time to think of the real Wolof word and ended up using the French word instead. His commentary shows that the liberal use of French loans in Wolof is in fact the unmarked norm and that to do otherwise would require considerable effort.

For many speakers of urban Wolof negative and positive attitudes toward the language can be held simultaneously. There is a general respect for *olof piir* and admiration for those who master it, but at the same time the covert prestige associated with speaking urban Wolof makes it highly appropriate as the language of the city and *olof piir* highly inappropriate in the same context.[2] As it turns out, in the extended sociolinguistic interviews I carried out in Dakar in 2005 there is an unexpected correlation between age and attitudes toward urban Wolof which I interpret, in the following section, as an indicator that urban Wolof is an old, rather than recent, variety of the language.

5.2.1 "The way we have always spoken"

The data on language attitudes I collected in 2005 were based on extensive open-ended sociolinguistic interviews I conducted in urban Wolof with 15 people from a variety of educational and income levels who ranged in age from 16 to 70 years. At the outset it was anticipated that younger people would exhibit more tolerant and positive attitudes toward urban Wolof than the older generation, but in fact the most liberal attitudes came from the oldest participants, namely those in their sixties.

The least tolerant and most critical attitudes came from those in the 30–40-year age group, while the youngest participants were somewhat indifferent. Although a full analysis and discussion of these attitudes is beyond the scope of this chapter, a brief look at some of the issues involved reveals further evidence for my position that urban Wolof is an old variety of the language.

Speakers in the study who were under 30 years of age tended not to have very strong feelings about urban Wolof one way or another and seemed to accept it as an unmarked norm. This was in stark contrast to those in the 30–45-year-old group who had strong feelings about urban Wolof and became very animated in their discussion of it. It was among this age group that most of the negative attitudes appeared. Primarily, the critiques launched against urban Wolof consisted of regret and loss of a coherent and authentic way of speaking that involved no French borrowings. Some speakers even went so far as to voice their disgust at what they perceived as a general failure on the part of the urban, Wolof-speaking population to maintain their language correctly and viewed French borrowings as the result of speakers' laziness and alienation from their roots. The interviews were conducted in Wolof, and tellingly, there was no significant difference in the use of French borrowings between the under-30-year age group and the 30–45-year-old age group, despite the differences in their attitudes. In other words, those who expressed negative attitudes toward the incorporation of French loans into their Wolof did not generally use any fewer French loans than those who were indifferent to borrowing from French. In contradistinction to the negative attitudes exhibited by the 30–45-year-old age group, the oldest group of individuals in the study were very tolerant toward urban Wolof and its French borrowings. In particular, they expressed the attitude that urban Wolof was simply a way of communicating and that it served its purpose well so there was no need to critique it. Moreover, they expressed the idea that there was a history to the language and that it was a very Senegalese way of speaking. As a 69-year-old Wolof teacher put it, "It's the way we have always spoken."

These unanticipated results in the survey of attitudes embedded in my 2005 sociolinguistic interviews reveal an interesting dynamic in how speakers of urban Wolof view their language. The youngest group were born well after independence in 1960 while middle group were born at the time of independence or shortly thereafter, and those in the oldest group were born toward the end of the colonial period. While much could potentially be made of this correlation, I will only extrapolate that the tolerant attitudes of the older generation reveal a long-standing prestige that has been associated with urban Wolof, perhaps since it first came into being. The attitudes of the older generation are

a correlate to the claim that I have made elsewhere (Mc Laughlin 2008) that urban Wolof has a long history as a prestigious language that comes from its association with the older cities and former cultural capitals of Senegal. The remaining sections of this chapter are devoted to exploring the details of where and how urban Wolof came into being, and to sketching a social history of the language based on contemporary and historical evidence.

5.3 The Atlantic island cities

The two most important sites in the development of an urban variety of Wolof were the island settlements of Gorée and Saint-Louis, particularly the latter which became the eventual capital of the extended territory of French West Africa (*Afrique Occidentale Française*). Close to the mainland, these two islands drew from nearby Wolof speaking populations in the early years of their history, and played an important role in the development of urban Wolof and its dissemination to other urban areas of the country.

5.3.1 Gorée

Gorée lies three kilometers from the tip of the Cape Verde peninsula, the westernmost point on the African continent. The island receives mention in the earliest Portuguese accounts of the West African coast dating from the fifteenth century, and a chapel with a cemetery was built there by Portuguese masons and carpenters as early as 1481. From the late sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth century Gorée was occupied back and forth by the Dutch and the Portuguese, after which the English and French vied for control of the island and it switched hands between them numerous times until the early years of the nineteenth century when it came under definitive French control after the English abolished slavery. Various commercial and maritime companies had interests in Gorée and it served as an important *comptoir* or trading post and played a significant role in the trans-Atlantic slave trade, especially during the first half of the eighteenth century.

Contact between Africans and Europeans on the West African coast gave rise to a *métis* or mixed race population that was to play an important role in Senegal's early cities. Most prominent—and most mythologized—among this population was a group of influential women known as *signares*, from the Portuguese *senhora* "lady." Although there is evidence that a group known as *signares* had existed since the end of the fifteenth century at various places on the West African coast, it was not

until the eighteenth century that they become influential actors in Gorée and Saint-Louis.

The *signares* were socially and economically prominent women, many of whom entered into temporary marriages with Frenchmen, and the commercial interests that they held were often the consequence of their alliances with French merchants. They headed households that comprised large numbers of domestic slaves and were able to provide their French husbands with the comforts of home and take care of them when they were ill with yellow fever, malaria, and other diseases that ravaged the European population on the West African coast. Elsewhere (Mc Laughlin 2008a) I have hypothesized that the more or less equal relations between the *signares* and Europeans played a significant linguistic role and may account, at least partially, for why a French-based creole never emerged on the West African coast, since creoles tend to emerge in situations of marked social inequality between groups.

As Ricou (2003: 87) points out, the prominent social and economic role played by the *signares* and the *métis* population in general contributed greatly to the urbanization of the island. The relative prosperity of this population and their attachment to the island as a permanent place of residence led them, from the seventeenth century on, to build the first stone or brick houses on the island, gradually replacing the ubiquitous straw dwellings. In a very direct sense, then, the *signares* and other *métis* were part of the founder population of the emerging city of Gorée, one of Senegal's first urban areas.

5.3.2 Saint-Louis du Sénégal

A second (and possibly even more important for the history of urban Wolof) island city that came into being as the result of African and European contact is that of Saint-Louis du Sénégal, known as Ndar in Wolof. Situated within the Senegal River, not far from the present day border with Mauritania, the island was naturally protected from maritime military attacks. Saint-Louis was established as a *comptoir* in 1654 by the French and was eventually used as a base from which to explore areas further upriver toward the interior. Consequently, it became an important port for goods and commodities being brought into and leaving West Africa, and a significant site in the Atlantic slave trade.

As Searing (2005) shows, the African population of the island was fairly transient until about 1740 when small numbers of people from the mainland began to settle on the island. Like Gorée, Saint-Louis was characterized by a heterogeneous population of Africans, Europeans, and eventually a *métis* community that included many prominent *signares*

who had similarly prominent social and economic roles to their counterparts on Gorée. Searing also makes the convincing argument that the *signares* were the founders of the urban African population in Saint-Louis since their settlement on the island heralded the establishment of a permanent community there.

In both Gorée and Saint-Louis the influence of the *signares* eventually gave way to a general political and commercial power among the *métis* community, and the distinctive identity of the *signares* was relegated to the pages of history, but as the founder populations of these two Atlantic island cities they and their descendants played a fundamental role in the linguistic history of urban Senegal as we shall see in the following section.

5.4 Evaluating the evidence

In making the argument that an urban variety of Wolof emerged at an early point in the development of Senegal's cities I rely on a variety of evidence, some of it linguistic and some more broadly cultural. Early accounts of language on the emerging island cities emphasize the predominance of Wolof, while later-nineteenth-century accounts provide incontrovertible evidence of an urban dialect characterized by French borrowings, as well as important commentary on it.

5.4.1 The eighteenth century

Some of the earliest accounts of the linguistic norms of the inhabitants of Saint-Louis and Gorée come from European travelers who went there in the late eighteenth century, a few decades after a permanent African population was established. These accounts emphasize the dominance of Wolof and the disadvantages for Europeans who did speak it. Witness, for example, the words of Saugnier (1792: 273):

> To be proof against their wiles, it is absolutely necessary to know the Yolof language; for when a man is not acquainted with it, recourse must be had to interpreters, who necessarily belonging to this people, always cheat and share, according to agreement, the produce of their knavery.

The mention of interpreters who spoke both Wolof and French is possibly a reference to the *laptots*, the African sailors-cum-interpreters who worked on the Senegal River route toward the interior of the country. The term *laptot* originally meant "sailor" but came to mean "interpreter" in Wolof, indicating that this latter aspect of their work was equally, if not more, valued as their skill as sailors.

The predominance of Wolof in Saint-Louis is also commented upon by Durand (1802: 217) who visited Senegal at the end of the eighteenth century:

> All the habitants, men and women, mulattoes and free blacks, speak French passably well. Their usual and natural language is Wolof, which is that of the neighboring peoples. Foreigners first learn how to count in Wolof.

Durand's comments on the African population's ability to speak French "passably well" are somewhat ambiguous, but at the very least they suggest a passive knowledge of French on the island, and maybe more.

In the eighteenth century the dominance of Wolof among the permanent African populations of Gorée and Saint-Louis, including the *signares*, was not only linguistic, but also cultural. Searing (2005) provides historical evidence to show that the *signares* frequented Wolof jewelers and griots, and that their rich dress was made of traditional Wolof strip weave rather than readily gotten imported fabrics. Moreover, although the French had made efforts to convert the populations to Christianity through the efforts of Catholic missionaries, a type of syncretism between Islamic, Christian, and traditional Wolof religious practices appears to have been quite prevalent. According to Jones (1980: 325), on Gorée there was evidence of an older, pre-Islamic, pre-Christian, religious tradition with links to Seereer animist practices from the mainland south of Dakar, while in Saint-Louis there was a greater and older Muslim population with less influence from animist religions. The following description of religious practice in Saint-Louis, cited by Jones (1980: 325), comes from Lamiral's 1789 account:

> They (the people of Saint-Louis) celebrate both the Christian and the Muslim feasts. Many of the Christian *habitants* have been circumcised since baptism and bear all the outward markings of Mohammedanism. There are those who, having been to mass, then make salaam, and pray with equal fervour to Jesus Christ and Mohammad.

Making reference to a *métis* woman at the end of Ramadan, Lamiral, cited by Hargreaves (1965: 181), further recounts that "(a) devout Christian mulatto woman might rejoice with the Muslims on the appearance of the new moon, alternately prostrating and crossing herself in thanksgiving."

Although historical evidence such as this provides good evidence for "cultural creolization" (Hannerz 1987) in eighteenth century Gorée and Saint-Louis, there is no record of a corresponding creole language. A question that has interested—and often puzzled—linguists who study

West Africa, is why a French-based creole never developed in France's earliest colonies on the West African coast in the way that different varieties of Portuguese-based creoles did. Although other types of contact languages that involve one or more African languages and French, such as urban Wolof and the more recent Nouchi (see Kube-Barth, this volume) have come into being, there is no evidence that a French-based creole was ever spoken in Senegal, France's oldest African colony. In Mc Laughlin (2008a: 721) I argue that the reasons may be found in the early history of African contact with French in the coastal areas, and specifically Saint-Louis:

> . . . the fact that Saint-Louis is a small island, just 2.3 kilometers long and 300 meters wide, must have contributed to the promiscuity of the populations involved. The African founder population of the island, consisting of the *signares* and their households, provided much-needed services to the male European population and were thus powerful actors in the settling of the city. The intimate nature of relations between the two groups and the general parity in their social status allowed for a linguistic environment where the *signares* and many members of their households could learn French "passably well," to cite Durand 1802, obviating the restructuring that is characteristic of a creole, which normally comes into being in social contexts where relations between the two groups are more restricted, unequal, and less frequent.

These unique social circumstances in the very early years of Senegalese urbanism did not favor the emergence of a creole, but it is also highly unlikely that the contact between Wolof and French speakers had no consequences for the dominant language of the emerging coastal cities, the precursor of contemporary urban Wolof. For clear linguistic evidence of contact we must turn to nineteenth century sources.

5.4.2 Nineteenth-century Saint-Louis du Sénégal

By the nineteenth century Saint-Louis had eclipsed Gorée in importance and by mid-century it had emerged as a prosperous colonial city. Prominent merchants included Muslim Africans, *métis*, and French, and by this time the *métis* population also dominated in municipal politics. In 1854 Louis Faidherbe, who had previously served as a French colonial administrator in Algeria, became governor of Senegal and established himself in Saint-Louis which was now the capital. Faidherbe did much to modernize the city: streets were laid out in a grid pattern and new buildings were constructed, a Muslim tribunal was established, and educational reforms were undertaken. Faidherbe also took a keen interest in the languages, traditions, and cultures of

Senegal and as an amateur anthropologist and linguist he wrote quite prolifically on those topics. One of the most interesting of Faidherbe's documents from the point of view of the linguistic history of Saint-Louis and of urban Wolof is a vocabulary he compiled and published in 1864 which lists approximately 1,500 French words with their equivalent in three Senegalese languages, including the Wolof of Saint-Louis. In his introduction to the volume Faidherbe gives the reader some idea of the extent to which Wolof was spoken and used as a lingua franca along the West African coast:

> The Wolof language is spoken in Saint-Louis, in Gorée, in Saint Mary's of Gambia, in the Waalo, in Kayoor, in Jolof. It is understood by half of the inhabitants of Baol, Siin and Saalum. It is the commercial language of all Senegal; half of the Trarza speak it. It extends along the African coast to Sierra Leone. (1864: 4)

Faidherbe then comments on his choice of the Saint-Louis variety by claiming that although it is "not the most pure" it is the "most useful" variety to know. By this he means that the Wolof of Saint-Louis has borrowed many lexical items from French, a fact that he describes in the following manner: "Many objects introduced by us (the French), in the country, are designated, in Wolof, by the mangled French name, and naturally have no name in the languages of the interior" (1864: 3). This is borne out by the vocabulary lists where for many terms there are blanks in Pulaar and Saraxole, the two other languages included in the vocabulary, but a French loan for the Wolof translation.

While Faidherbe's vocabulary explicitly addresses the question of lexical borrowing in the Wolof of Saint-Louis and provides many vocabulary items, many of which are technical terms associated with commerce, navigation and legal issues, a second publication in the same year, a French-Wolof phrase book by Louis Descemet, gives us an invaluable glimpse at how Wolof was spoken on the island at mid-century. Descemet's phrase book, described in detail in Mc Laughlin (2008a), is entitled *Collection of Around 1,200 Everyday French Phrases with a Facing Translation in Saint-Louis Wolof*. It was published shortly after Faidherbe's vocabulary and its author, member of a prominent Saint-Louis *métis* family, was Faidherbe's secretary at the time of its publication. The phrase book covers a wide variety of topics ranging from school and domestic life to military life, and according to Descemet's preface it was to be used in the schools so that students would know the meaning of the French sentences they were memorizing. He furthermore claims that he wrote the Wolof translations in the "simplest way possible" (1864: 5) as a guide to understanding the French. In Mc Laughlin (2008a) I claim that Descemet's Wolof is free of prescriptive norms and is a good

indicator of what spoken Wolof was actually like in nineteenth century Saint-Louis.

Descemet's phrase book corroborates Faidherbe's description of the Wolof of Saint-Louis in terms of lexical borrowing from French, and illustrates the use of such borrowings in a discursive context. Examples of phrases from the volume are given in (5–7) and illustrate the texture of urban nineteenth century Saint-Louis Wolof which bears a striking similarity to contemporary urban Wolof in the nature of borrowings from French. As in the examples from contemporary urban Wolof in Section 5.1, French borrowings are in boldface.

(5) Nékou-ma **l'abbé** (Descemet 1864: 7)
be.NEG-1s priest
"I am not a priest."

(6) **Pombiterre** ak **choux** a ngui (Descemet 1864: 28)
potatoes and cabbage PRES
"Here are some potatoes and cabbage."

(7) Diokhal **assette** **mousse**-bi (Descemet 1864: 28)
give.2s.IMP plate sir-DET
"Give the man a plate."

Both Faidherbe's vocabulary and Descemet's phrase book provide compelling evidence that a distinctive urban variety of Wolof, characterized by lexical borrowing from French, was spoken in Saint-Louis in the mid-nineteenth century. The fact that both men recorded urban Wolof in formal publications furthermore suggests that it was well established as a norm, and therefore must have emerged as an urban dialect well before 1864. Taken as a whole, the historical evidence from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries shows that language contact between Wolof and French did not result in a creole but rather in an urban variety of the language that exists as such to this day. In the final section of this chapter, links are drawn between the early forms of urban Wolof and contemporary urban Wolof.

5.5 Toward a social history of urban Wolof

To understand the social history of urban Wolof it is necessary to take into account the fact that at an early stage, prior to the emergence of Gorée and Saint-Louis as urban settlements, Wolof served as a lingua franca in northern Senegal. The African founder populations of the two islands came from the mainland and spoke Wolof.[3] With the arrival of the French and the establishment of their *comptoirs* lexical borrowing from French became the main characteristic of an urban dialect of Wolof.

The enduring reputation of Saint-Louis as a cultural capital with a tradition of refinement lent prestige to the urban dialect and ensured its survival and expansion.

5.5.1 Wolof as a lingua franca

Beginning in the thirteenth century, the Wolof established several kingdoms in northern Senegal which were consolidated, according to oral tradition, by Njaajaan Njaay, founder of the Wolof people, whose mother was purportedly a Pulaar speaker and father a Berber. The consolidated Wolof kingdoms were centralized and politically and militarily strong. They thus dominated the region and Wolof consequently became a lingua franca in the Wolof heartland of northern Senegal and westward to the Atlantic. Within Wolof territory there were many small groups of other Atlantic-speaking peoples who spoke Seereer and Cangin languages in addition to the lingua franca.[4] The fact that today there is relatively little dialectal variation in Wolof, other than the urban/non-urban distinction, attests to the fact that Wolof was widely used as a lingua franca. The dominance of Wolof on the Atlantic coast and its status as a lingua franca paved the way for its use on the nearby island settlements of Gorée and Saint-Louis in the early eighteenth century.

5.5.2 Wolof as an urban language

The islands of Gorée and Saint-Louis and the early cities that came into being there played a pivotal role in the development of urban Wolof. Before approximately 1740 there was no African population to speak of living on the islands, so it was only after the arrival of Europeans on the coast that a permanent African population was established there. What this means is that Gorée and Saint-Louis were sites of language contact between Wolof and French from the outset. Language contact was a reality from the very beginning of urban development in Senegal, making it highly plausible that urban Wolof, defined as a variety characterized by French borrowings, came into being at the same time as Senegal's early cities.

By mid-nineteenth century Saint-Louis had eclipsed Gorée as the most important port on the Senegalese coast, and with the founding of Dakar in 1857 a sizeable number of Goréens moved to the mainland which offered a great number of advantages, not least of which was abundant fresh water of which there was none available on Gorée. Saint-Louis was now a bustling and prosperous port city where commerce thrived and the population grew. An urbane and relatively tolerant

society noted for its cultural life were also attributes of the city, and as we know from Faidherbe and Descemet's work, the urban Wolof spoken there borrowed liberally from French.

Despite the fact that it fell into a steady decline in the twentieth century, eclipsed in turn by the new city of Dakar and the relocation of the colonial government there, Saint-Louis managed to maintain a certain prestige in the minds of the Senegalese population which continues even up to the present. Many of Senegal's intellectuals are from Saint-Louis or attended the prestigious Lycée Faidherbe there, and the association of the city with a culture of feminine elegance and refinement (which may well have originated with the *signares*) is admired in the popular imagination. The cultural prestige of Saint-Louis also makes its appearance in literature. A strangely complex 1954 novel by Senegalese author Abdoulaye Sadji entitled *Nini, mulâtresse du Sénégal* and set in Saint-Louis makes constant references to language. Nini and her *métis* friends put on airs by speaking French, but resort to Wolof when they do not want their French friends to understand. What Sadji's novel shows us is that language is also an important attribute of Saint-Louis' image in the popular Senegalese imagination.

5.5.3 Dakar Wolof

Although the origins of urban Wolof are much older than is generally thought, contact between Wolof and French has been continuously reinforced up to the present, and contemporary Dakar Wolof borrows liberally from French. As the official language and the language of the school system, French continues to be a lexifier language for urban Wolof. Other as yet undocumented changes are taking place in the morphology and syntax of Wolof as a consequence of extensive lexical borrowing, and the urban and rural dialects are thus diverging more and more from one another.

The negative attitudes toward urban Wolof discussed in Section 5.2 have done nothing to change the way people speak, primarily because they are balanced by positive attitudes toward the urban dialect which also carries a great deal of prestige. That it continues to flourish in Senegal, spreading to smaller towns that are remote from Dakar, is indicative of a society that is becoming increasingly urban. The prestige of urban Wolof stems in part from its association with modernity and opportunity, but it has older origins that come from the prestige associated with Saint-Louis as a cultural capital, a city that was, in its time, also associated with modernity and opportunity. So as well as being a modern, vibrant language, urban Wolof is also an old, prestigious variety

whose origins are inextricably linked to the unique circumstances of the emergence of Senegal's early cities.

Notes

1 These and all other examples, unless otherwise noted, come from my fieldwork on urban Wolof conducted in 2005 and 2006.
2 Swigart 1992 provides an in-depth look at these contradictory attitudes toward urban Wolof.
3 Gorée also drew from Seereer-speaking populations to the south of the Cape Verde peninsula, most of whom were probably bilingual in Seereer and Wolof.
4 For a more detailed discussion of the origins of Wolof and its use as a lingua franca, see Mc Laughlin 2008b.

6 Discourse, community, identity: processes of linguistic homogenization in Bamako[1]

Cécile Canut

Les traits naguère négatifs, absurdes sont devenus blancs, et pertinents: les normes fléchies ou cassées ont été reconstituées, les traditions et les littératures orales déformées ou ignorées, en tout cas vouées au dépérissement, sont célébrées, recueillies, et même étudiées en vue de leur réinjection dans la société. Jeux inoffensifs qui, actuellement, plaident brillamment pour la majesté des cultures et civilisation africaines, alors qu'en vérité, plus qu'hier, celles-ci sont en voie de folklorisation grâce à l'efficace des rationalités et des pouvoirs économiques eur-américains.

V.Y. Mudimbe, L'odeur du père

6.1 Introduction

The urban question in Mali is quite a recent one given that its cities, and particularly the capital, Bamako, were built on a French model (or European model in general) in the colonial image. While there were, of course, places of contact between populations, and historical centers such as Timbuctu, Gao, Segou, and Bamako, where major political events took place during the pre-colonial period, the rural economic exodus of the past decades has nonetheless resulted in a system of social, economic, and institutional organization copied from the ex-colonizers. For a multitude of social, political, and economic reasons, however, the process of urbanization is not identical to what can be observed in France, or in Europe in general. The strong presence of young people under the age of 20 in African capitals, the extremely high levels of unemployment and poverty, the role of the informal economy, and the place of multilingualism, are just some of the distinctive characteristics of West African cities. The linguistic stakes, like other characteristics, are difficult to reduce to general oppositional terms (vehicular languages vs. vernaculars or ethnic vs. official vs. national languages), because

the diversity of each situation demands a qualitative approach which necessitates taking into account contexts, situations, speech, constant variation, subjective positioning, polyphonic discourse, and power strategies.

Rather than focusing my analysis on supposedly African characteristics such as multilingualism, the impact of dominant colonial official languages, or the imbalances between the various African languages with regard to a priori categories constructed by researchers, I will focus on the recent construction of discourse on African languages that is generally passed on by teachers, researchers and intellectuals, founders of associations, journalists, civil servants, politicians, and artists, all of whom reside in the city.

For the majority of the rural and urban population, my surveys show that linguistic practices are never related to the positioning or defining of the self, to identification, to membership, or to what is commonly referred to as the construction of identity. The near absence of metalinguistic discourse on this topic has led me to argue (Canut 2008) that *heterogeneity is constitutive of linguistic practice*. Language mixing, linguistic overlap, and plural linguistic practices are all part of daily life and do not for the most part evoke any special type of metadiscourse, they are simply a reality; moreover, speakers are always baffled by the importance researchers give to the topic (Canut 2008). Notwithstanding, the last few years have seen the emergence of a metalinguistic discourse of linguistic homogenization that has, however, had very little impact on language use in Mali. This discourse, which has come into being in the city, falls within the scope of what Foucault has termed discursive formation, coming from multiple places of enunciation, all of which have in common the goal of publicly legitimizing organizational and institutional voices, namely those of intellectuals and academics (teachers, public servants, writers, legislators, researchers, students, artists, etc.), those of politicians, members of social organizations (associations, non-governmental organizations, etc.), social movements, journalists (newspaper, radio, and television), and so forth. This discourse leads systematically, and with an ethno-political agenda, to the creation of boundaries between languages and between ethnic groups so that languages are used and deployed with the goal of bringing "identity" stances into the public sphere. If this type of reification of linguistic and ethnic boundaries evokes the phenomenon of "groupism" (Brubaker et al. 2004) and the ethnicization of populations (some of which have turned out to be more effective than others, notably in the case of the ethnic reification of the Fulɓe), it nevertheless touches on all the so-called "ethnic" components constructed and imposed by colonial ethnolinguistic research and more recently by the "entrepreneurs

of tradition" or what Brubaker et al. (2004) call "ethnolinguistic entrepreneurs."

This process of linguistic homogenization relies on a host of essentialist presuppositions specific to the humanities in the early twentieth century (but still present today) which have as a goal the categorization and hierarchicalization of languages based on supposedly scientific principles such as origins, purity, richness, complexity, and "truth," thereby reactivating a series of essentialist dichotomies, attributing subjective and social values to languages that are now delimited and reified.

The goal of this chapter is to show how this compartmentalizing discourse is constructed from deep within a discursive polyphony (akin to Bakhtine's dialogism) and linked on one hand with scholarly discourse (often written) from before the turn of the century, and on the other with current external discourse which takes part in what Stolcke (1996: 233) calls cultural fundamentalism. Far from being a natural or biological function of the speaking subjects, this discourse (and practice) results from very precise enunciative contexts where questions of power and place-holding are continuously played out (Foucault 1971, inter alia). The processes of homogenization are the result of the reification of self-positioning with regard to the other, conditioned by recent notions of identity, and reinforced by ethnic, nationalist, and essentialist discourse within a new reifying category, that of globalization.

The chapter will conclude with a proposal for an epistemological reflection on the role of researchers and the humanities, including the role of linguistics with its problematic notion of *langue* (Meschonnic 1995a, b; 1997; Sériot 1997; 1999). Following close on the heels of recent sea changes that have taken place in anthropology and sociology (e.g. Amselle 1990; 1996; 1998; 2001; Amselle and M'Bokolo 1995; Brubaker and Cooper 2000; Schieffelin et al. 1998), with regard to our understanding of notions such as ethnic group, nation, social group, and culture, I will raise some very practical field-oriented questions that will allow us to avoid reproducing political and ideological categorization in reporting linguistic reality.

As with the construction of the French nation, for example, the city, and specifically the capital, is one of the privileged sites where language and ethnic groups are defined, since it allows for a more rapid dissemination of discourse—essentialist or otherwise—through transmittal of the written word, academia, the media (radio and television are currently the tools most often employed in the promotion of cultural fundamentalism), associations that defend and promote languages and cultures, and through the concentration of educated people, including intellectuals, politicians, and so forth. As a site of economic, political,

social, and symbolic power and domination, the city becomes, in an industrial and liberal sense, the object of desire for a large part of the rural population who can no longer provide for themselves, subjected as they are to externally imposed economic constraints. On arrival in the city this population, which is often very poor, is easily manipulated. Newcomers are immediately confronted with unavoidable new categories, new social, cultural, and linguistic boundaries, with social groups such as ethnic groups, social classes, and castes, that have been newly constructed or reconstituted for different purposes. Even though the fluidity of self-positioning remains the dominant element, discursive resources that condition the reification of social groups, ethnic groups, and languages are gaining more and more ground in this new urban environment. The geographic (and often social) dislocation, in tandem with the destabilization that it imposes for those who are newly arrived in the city, precipitates a real quest for place and for new stances: within the framework of these subjective and social reconfigurations, the grids and the pre-established categories take on the allure of a readymade identity, founded on difference and sameness.

6.2 Open city: the multiplicity of gazes

There are innumerable ways of speaking about places, different ways of considering or describing urban phenomena, all of which depend on the position and perception of the speaker *vis-à-vis* the city. We may be born in the city, may come from the outside (from a village, another city, another continent), may be passing through, or may stay. In general, we travel *between* several places. For this reason, we do not conceive of the urban environment as a homogeneous spatial phenomenon with well-defined boundaries: intermediary places labeled suburbs, inner cities, or neighborhoods for example, involve taking into account the village-city continuum. The urban condition only exists insofar as it is predicated on the space between these places.

Added to this first condition, the only way of understanding the heterogeneity characteristic of cities is to focus the analysis on the subjective trajectories of each speaker. This perspective implies long empirical and qualitative observations and the gathering of numerous life narratives. Even if, in the end, points in common appear among these diverse personal paths, uniqueness remains the essential element in the relationship to space and its attendant discourses (Fabian 2001).

My approach to linguistic practices in Mali has the same goal: to restore discourse and language usage to their enunciative contexts so as to avoid all externally imposed categories. This perspective involves abandoning formal interviews, surveys, questionnaires, and conventional

sociolinguistic frameworks. The results proposed here are based on everyday narratives, observations on everyday language, and conversations collected over a very long period of time during which the researcher avoided all categories not proposed by the speaker. Thus the words language, ethnicity, identity, dialect, and caste, for example, were never mentioned by the researcher. At no time did the researcher solicit opinions from the speaker about the links between linguistic practices and self-identification or collective belonging. This shift in fieldwork technique has real consequences for the results and constitutes the foundation of the thesis defended in my most recent work, namely that heterogeneity is *constitutive* of language practices. Field data from urban zones lead us to consider the phenomena of linguistic homogenization (of which the archetype is the concept of *langue*) as the result of political discourse, in the sense of the first of its meanings, the discourse of the *polis*, a public discourse born of the city. This discourse is reproduced and can then spread to the rural zones. But this has not yet happened in Mali, as I will show.

6.3 From village to city: the first step in ethno-linguistic categorization

To tackle the question of linguistic use in Bamako, a fairly new city that today boasts a population of more than a million, involves beginning in the village, and moving to intermediary towns. Specifically, my fieldwork focuses on the southwest region of Mali including the villages of Sagabari and Bendugu near the city of Kita which is linked to Bamako by rail.

The first Africanists, colonial administrators and ethnologists, described the Mande zone according to genealogical theories of the time, reducing a situation of complex linguistic overlapping to a dialectal grid stemming from proto-Mandinka, the supposed original language of the Mande family. Today made up of languages known as Jula (*Julakan*), Bambara (*Bamanankan*), and Malinke (*Maninkakan*), Mande languages are spoken essentially in Mali, northern Côte d'Ivoire, northern Guinea, and southern Burkina Faso. My observations have shown that within the so-called Malinke zone, corresponding to the area encompassing Kita and Bamako in western Mali, it is impossible to trace the boundaries between languages. If numerous variations exist all along the continuum, between the villages of Sagabari and Bendugu and the towns of Kita and Bamako, they cannot be categorized or divided according to territory. The frequent movement of populations between villages and cities reinforces this inextricable overlapping.

My research shows that speakers from Sagabari, Bendugu, and Kita use variation in their repertoire, according to the communicative circumstances, including place and context. They constantly play on the possibilities of the continuum according to their degree of knowledge and familiarity with it. Thus, based on a large number of socio-symbolic parameters such as the role of the village, kinship, desire for "modernity," profession, type of interlocutor, and so on, practices vary for each individual speaker depending on where s/he is, the person to whom s/he is speaking, the topic, and what social and cultural aspects s/he wishes to reveal of her/himself at that moment, resulting in an identification effect that is multiple and variable. Speakers can move from one form to another or mix the different characteristics of each together. This play back and forth on the continuum is the result of both conscious and unconscious effects because it is often impossible for speakers to explain linguistically why they use a certain sound or a certain word. If they are able to occasionally associate another individual with a geographic affiliation, (the person who speaks Bamakokan, Kitakan, or Sagabarikan) they are not always able to isolate how they know it. The linguistic elements most often cited—at the insistence of the researcher!—are the easiest to hear: phonetic alternations (e.g. [x] in Sagabari corresponding to [k] in Kita) and lexical differences. On the other hand, morpho-syntactic variation (e.g. alternations in the third person plural pronoun/alu/, /al/, /u/, or the perfective transitive marker /-ta/, /-da/, /-ra/), as well as phonological variations (e.g. vowel aperture) are only ever evoked by linguists or those interested in linguistic questions (Table 6.1).

Faced with this fluid situation, characteristic of all speakers, whether they be young or old, male or female, becomes very difficult to define any stable micro-systems. Only a bare-bones geographical dimension,

Table 6.1 Morphological variation in Mandinka by place

	Intransitive	**Transitive**
Sagabari	-tɑ /ɑlu tagɑtɑ/	ti /ɑlu ti i ban/
Bendugu	-da /alu tagada/	di /alu di i ban/
Kita	-ra (-la/-da/-ta) /al tagara/	ye (di/ ti) /al ye i ban/
Bamako	ra / la /u taara/	ye /u ye i ban/
English	"they left"	"they refused"

at best, can generate anything approaching a symbolic borderline between varieties since the speakers themselves propose it (Sagabarikan, "the speech of Sagabari," *Bendugukan*, "the speech of Bendugu," etc.) referring to a minimal spatial dimension[2]: the village group which refers back to people who share the same habitation, village or hamlet. Even then, we must exercise caution in imputing any kind of original stability of micro-systems to a particular village. We know that West African populations have been extremely mobile before, during and after colonization (Amselle and M'Bokolo 1985). It is especially true in West Africa that even if the village birthplace plays a role in determining the subjective positioning of a speaker, the constant movement of individuals or geographic mobility are not unique to the present. African history, like that of any other continent, reveals plenty of population movements linked to multiple factors such as nomadism, rural exodus, economic migrations, and conflicts. To assign these varieties or ways of speaking to their supposed place of "origin" would be tantamount to legitimating the relativist theses that crop up in turn of the (twentieth) century ethnology that describes a Golden Age of Africa composed of ethnic groups rooted to the land of their ancestors and whose cultural and social manifestations would be predetermined by immutable traditions. If nothing proves that groups or individuals coming from the Mande zone are guardians of an original Mandingo language or proto-Mande, there is nothing either that proves that the inhabitants of Sagabari, Bendugu, or Kangaba (from where the original inhabitants were supposedly chased) are the guardians of an original language variety that evolved uniquely in the village and can be defined by specific linguistic traits that can be described today. If the idea that exchanges, movement, contact between peoples and goods only developed with the advent of colonization, a view long held in ethnographic analyses but which has today been clearly refuted by anthropology, it persists on one form or another in linguistic approaches to Africa.

This division into micro-systems corresponding to so many villages would be useless for comprehending multilingualism in this zone. If phonological, phonetic, morphological, or lexical markers are distinguished geographically, they are better seen in the rural–urban divide. It is only when speakers move about or meet a stranger that they become conscious of their particular linguistic features and the processes of comparison and transformation are put in place leading to the overlapping of different varieties which cannot be categorized.

Returning now to the field, what exactly happens between Sagabari, Bendugu, Kita, and Bamako? How is the play along the continuum of linguistic forms produced by speakers? What happens when a speaker from Sagabari meets a speaker from Segou or from Bamako? Let us not

forget that in the Mande zone, which is not necessarily the case with other linguistic continua such as Songhay, Fula, or Tamasheq, there is substantial mutual intelligibility between varieties because there are a relatively small number of variations between them. For speakers, manipulating the continuum is not about changing speech practices in order to be understood, but about other complex and varied extralinguistic reasons to which I will return below. The cases are numerous and not easily categorized.[3] On one hand, the features which are used are not always the same and remain interchangeable in the same conversation; on the other hand, they are not exclusive of one another, in fact, it is the opposite: they are cumulative. For example, a speaker from Sagabari in Bamako can juggle the phonetic opposition between [x] and [k] so as to conform to the Bamako model while not observing the phonological opposition of the degree of aperture between /o/ and /ɔ/ (in *woro* and *wɔrɔ*, for example). If we correlate patterns of use with extralinguistic factors such as age, education, birthplace, social milieu, metalinguistic discourse, and so on, we have to admit that a large part of the corpus remains unexplained because variation is not always systematic. Play on the linguistic continuum is a function of parameters that are often unconscious on the part of the speaker and difficult for the researcher to describe from the outside. By dubbing these unexplainable variations "markers of identity," a criterion of last resort, the problem is avoided. Besides the strong influence of accommodation to the speech of others which often triggers spontaneous transformations, criteria as vague as fatigue, for example—which might lead to less vigilance *vis-à-vis* forms considered as better adapted to the interaction for the speaker—can be added to the analysis of extralinguistic factors. Even though s/he might possess all the features characteristic of Bamako speech, a young person from Sagabari who wants to speak the way people in Bamako do and identify with an urban "modernity" never engages in only one type of linguistic practice. According to the contextual parameters, but also as a function of factors that are more difficult to categorize or indeed almost impossible to determine,[4] the speaker's linguistic practices rely on the entirety of the features of the *Sagabarikan-Bamakokan* continuum.

The contemporary urban environment in Africa is fascinating since cities are the meeting place for many different types of dynamic linguistic continua as well as the site of creation of new categories. In Bamako, Mali's capital, a multitude of continua intertwine. Among the best known are the most homogenized which go by the names Peul (generally from the regions of Mopti, Djenné, and Niafunke), Songhay (from the regions of Timbuctu, Diré, and Gao), Tamasheq (from the Sahara), Soninke, Malinke (from Kangaba to Kita), Dogon, Senufo, Minyanka, and so on.

Clearly, these continua possess a large number of phonetic and systematic variations. However, when a speaker of Bamakokan meets a Songhay speaker, the Bamakokan speaker knows that s/he has to move to a different system, a different language. Mutual intelligibility is disrupted and the two continua are no longer compatible. The experience—which is always subjective—of the border between systems suddenly perceived as separate entities (even if they are viewed as open and undefined)—is therefore truly real.

Characteristic of the Malian population in general is the repeated acquisition of the language of the other, even if only in fragments or pieces of language. Even if Peul, Songhay, and Dogon speakers learn Bamakokan out of necessity because it is the vehicular language which allows them access to social integration, it is not only the result of a strategy of communication. My observations show that the knowledge of others comes about by way of their language, which motivates every traveler to learn the language of his surroundings, for better (comprehension of others, symbolic, or socioeconomic advantage) or for worse (*korofo*, understanding the evil intentions of others). Of course speakers of *Bamakokan* learn their fellow citizens' native languages less frequently, especially if they settle in the southern part of the country. However, in the home of the Mandingo family where I have conducted field work for the last 10 years, located in Kalaban Koro Plateau, a neighborhood a little outside Bamako, intrusions from Peul, Songhay, and Dogon are not absent. First, the head of the family, D., traveled widely in the country in his youth and brought back Peul and Songhay usage. Thus, each day, when the milk vendor passes through the courtyard, D. takes great pleasure in greeting him and speaking Peul with him. Similarly, when he comes in for water, the shopkeeper whose shop is attached to the house is addressed in Songhay, his native language, by the head of the family. These languages are used in a friendly way, often the sign of joking or games. At other times, one of the older girls M., begins to sing a Dogon song that she has heard on television: for 6 years she was reared by her aunt in Bandiagara, and has taken from it the use of three supplemental languages (to varying degrees of fluency): Peul, Songhay, and Dogon. Added to this, linguistic practices in the household fluctuate permanently on the Mandingo continuum since the parents come from different villages (Sélengué and Yerechona) and the children were born in Bamako. Some of them retain the phonetic or morphological features of their villages, others alternate with Bamakokan features, and still others only use features associated with Bamako (young men use exclusively what they call *les argots* (slang) among themselves). In this Bamako family, which is one of the least multilingual, there is nonetheless some linguistic overlap and attempts to use

multiple languages, including alternations with standard French or features of what sociolinguists refer to as Malian French, which entails a set of specific phonetic, morphological, and lexical features. Reinforced by new African television series in French (like, for example, *Suke et Sidiki*), the features of Malian French seem to be more and more adopted and used by the family, except the school-teacher parents, and especially the retired father, who continue to speak the colonial French they were taught in the 1950s. In sum, apart from the numerous spontaneous borrowings from French into Bamakokan, the use of French is relegated to the occasional serious discussion between the father and one of his children, or with a foreigner who is (or is imagined to be) of high social status.

Turning now to a family where the parents are from Peul and Songhay regions, the linguistic practices here are more diverse since a speaker can easily speak five or six languages in the course of a day.[5] A robust societal multilingualism entails a robust individual multilingualism which is especially noticeable in medium-sized towns such as Mopti, Gao, or Djenné. Certainly, the politically motivated reification of languages has not led to political or social equality between them: although 13 languages[6] currently have the status of national language, Bambara, which corresponds to *Bamakokan*, is unofficially considered the national language by many, because of its status as a vehicular language and its dominance in the capital and political center. But using French, the official language brought by colonial administrators, does not have the same effect as using Malian languages. There are numerous and complex strategies of communication which involve an endless positioning of the self with regard to others, but which also give rise to very rich linguistic creativity.

Thus, numerous Malians appreciate the linguistic and social diversity of their country, and the multiple relations that unite them, such as formulaic joking relationships between various social groups. Even if at the outset it is just a few words or a few greetings, language permits a dialogue with others and with oneself. In this sense language is not a mark of possession, the goal is not perfect competence in a language, but instead it is the link that facilitates relations with another, through pieces or bits of language.

This perspective contributes to the profusion of so-called language mixing. The term is inadequate, however, because it presupposes two fixed entities which give rise to a third: code-mixing is not a third language. These mixtures rely upon other mixtures, upon other types of linguistic fluctuation, and their precariousness calls for the greatest care in any attempt to categorize them. Juillard's (1995) work in this domain, conducted in Ziguinchor, Senegal, is invaluable. She shows

that the choice of codes stems from the management of repertoires available as a function of the situation of interaction, of goals and expectations, and of suppositions on the part of the speakers. If the three processes of adaptation, distancing and equilibrium are at work in one's relationship to the other, then code-switching can only be interpreted as the redefining of interaction within a generalized variability. Thus the findings on this pluralistic practice, in Senegal as well as Mali, allow us to do away with the notion of ethnic languages which have no basis in reality but simply confirm pre-established categories and an essentialist view of language.

The questions of place and subjective positioning in time and space—and with regard to others—are primordial elements in the comprehension of linguistic practice. For this reason, being in a city, village, or capital does not involve the same types of practices nor the same type of discourses about languages.

6.4 The reification of discourses of ethnicity and culture in Bamako

While it is clear that Bamako, and Mali in general, offers the possibility of better understanding the heterogeneous dimension of language through linguistic practice, it is also useful to understand the various discourses *about* those practices which come into being specifically in the city.[7] Even if the discourses do not tell us everything about the link between subject and language, my hypothesis is that they are essential to understanding those practices, not through taking into account the arguments of which they are the subject, but rather through drawing out the subjective processes behind them. These processes are by definition specific to each individual but they also interact with the social, political, and ideological dimensions of the larger discursive context. It is the entirety of this discursive background, in which the subject is completely taken in by the exterior world, that I seek to elucidate by examining *epilinguistic discourse*.

The initial process of homogenization that originates in the city, and especially the capital, is a social process that categorizes people, languages, and so forth, through naming, identification or exclusion. Confronted with speakers from different backgrounds, these discourses establish distinctions between populations and languages. This categorization, which varies according to the interaction, does not necessarily lead to hierarchicalization, but often leads to language play, laughter, and teasing, but never contempt.

This first type of homogenizing discourse is based upon geographical (recognition of a speaker by her/his accent, self-identification according

to subjective values associated with a way of speaking) or social criteria (positive or negative value judgment of rural ways of speaking associated with village activities). They are never prescriptive, but in a subjective and fluid way they trace out borders between the self and others, *at a given moment, a given place, and in a given situation*. These processes of categorization vary for an individual speaker depending on place, time, interlocutor, degree of familiarity, the topic of conversation, the speaker's self-positioning, needs, and view of the interlocutor. These are the intersubjective parameters that condition the discourse.

The second type of homogenization, which is a more recent phenomenon, involves discourses used only by a certain elite segment of the population. In the city, speakers are confronted with new categories involving not just spatial oppositions but also community divisions. The encounter with new linguistic practices and new individuals always gives rise to a process of differentiation and comparison, and the political discourse of ethnicity and culture necessarily supplies the terms to define oneself. These ethnonyms and glossonyms assign newcomers to new social places against which, in certain circumstances, they must position themselves. These new categories in which a seemingly fixed ethnicity is interchangeable with a place of residence or origin engage in a double determinism: each ethnic group has its roots in a specific region, and the borders that delineate a territory, an ethnic group and its language thus construct a series of independent communities. The notion of descent is subsumed into ethnicity, linked to a territory. Thus the Peuls of Wassoulou or the region of Kita who no longer speak Pulaar can only be "lost Peuls," who have strayed into the wrong place, even if they continue to call themselves Peuls. The reification of identification erases plurality and substitutes a fixed culturalist conception of identification from which those who are excluded must now define themselves with empty, negative terms (false Peul, deracinated, lost)—the exceptions that prove the rule of homogenization (Amselle 1990; Chrétien Prunier 2003). The objective of many elites, therefore, is to fill in the boxes and justify them. Because "that is how it is" they are not interested in questioning the cultural, ethnic, and linguistic borders that have already been established, but rather in filling in the gaps and legitimizing them. For these intellectuals, such compartmentalization of languages and ethnic groups can also be a strategic move, which explains their mass rejection of attempts in recent anthropology to deconstruct notions of ethnicity in favor of a conception of history in terms of a "chain of societies" (Amselle 1990). If, in practice, everything reveals a permanent state of flux between individuals, notably in linguistic variation, then it is interesting to note that this same plurality is today integrated into anthropological discourse through the idea of *métissage* or *hybridity*.

Rather than attributing the mixing of populations to marriage, changes in identity, and changes in language that result from pre-colonial social and political forces, those who take up the cause of ethnicity do just the opposite: the mixing of populations can only be the product of the meeting of well-defined isolated communities with no prior contact. They have come full circle: what is important for the nation is to encourage diversity and understanding between ethnic groups, and to instill this sentiment in the minds of its citizens.

Today, the *raison ethnologique* has been appropriated by influential people in the city and serves as the backbone of much public discourse. The aim is to reduce a language to an emanation of culture, ethnicity, or nation, with no room for the heterogeneity of reality. Posed as discourses of truth, sometimes as slogans, they are nonetheless entirely determined by colonial and ethnological discourse, what Mudimbe calls "the colonial library." They reactivate the old discourse and essentialist buzzwords, and now combine them with American ethno-nationalist discourses (Canut 2006).

In contrast to the discussions I collected on a day-to-day basis, in which dialogism and heterogeneity are a recurrent theme, interviews on these intellectual discourses rarely included discussions of subjectivity or past experiences, but were based on a vocabulary of origins, authenticity, and sameness. The appropriation of colonial classification and hierarchies produces a new discourse of *doxa* presented as the discourse of identity. This discursive construct, which cannot be dissociated from French (and generally European) epilinguistic discursive constructs, is the result of the many processes of homogenization deployed in France: language as cultural emblem, writing as a superior element in the make-up of "real" languages, assigning a language variety to a community, an ethnic group, or a nation, the superiority of French (and European languages in general) over African ones, the racialization of groups, the reappropriation of the vocabulary of colonial administrators, and the deployment of multiculturalism.

Even if it still represents a minority view at odds with reality, this type of discourse nonetheless dominates public space in Mali. Anchored as it is in politics and the media, it has the potential to influence large segments of the population, and in particular the urban population. Like the Senegalese and Burkinabe models, it is being imposed as the dominant discourse, both because it is the first public discourse on language, and because it is understood as scholarly discourse. Success is also due in part to an ever-increasing symbolic and economic discrimination coming from Europe and from France: the treatment of Africa and Africans by European politicians and media (as seen in social, political, and religious events, the economic requirements of the IMF,

the negative representation of Africa, etc.) is an important element in the process of exclusion and the emphasis on values promoted as "authentic," "traditional," or "African." The goal of numerous African intellectuals and artists (like Léopold Senghor or Cheikh Anta Diop) was ostensibly to promote an African, national, or ethnic specificity or particularity that broke with the vision of colonial ethnology. The new political "entrepreneurs of tradition," in their revival of phenomena such as joking relationships between social groups, follow in the same direction, but this need to break away is nonetheless articulated in the very terms of European epilinguistic discourse.

If today these identitarian phenomena can be said to exist, simply because the paradigm of identity has emerged out of discourse,[8] must we consider them, scientifically, to be real facts that constitute a subject, such as it is, or as a reifying construct that has been re-appropriated by speakers? Most current literature interprets these propositions as facts of reality. The speaker's discourse is never compared to other discourses, s/he tells the truth: the identity of an immigrant from the Maghreb is Islamic, because s/he says so; the identity of a Kabyle is Berber, because s/he says so; the identity of a Peul is his or her "Peulness" or the Pulaar language, because s/he says so. Language appears systematically as a syncretic element in this reification of identity, along with notions of origin and community. The refusal to put discourse in perspective within the full range of discursive constructs covering the entire field of the construction of identity leads to the refusal of an interpretive analysis that integrates pre-existing discourses, whether political, intellectual, emanating from the media, or social. In making identity a concept—with a vague meaning—we save ourselves the trouble of investigating the complexity of the construction of discourse. We tease out a so-called "identity" from the polyphonic discourse, and, ultimately, we guarantee the categories which permit the politics of classifying, creating hierarchies, and monitoring the population. However, this claim and its linguistic corollary (language = identity) are based on the politics of standardization created in nineteenth century Europe in normalizing politics which was created in Europe in the nineteenth century (language = the soul of a people) and theorized in the social sciences throughout the twentieth century.

In the face of homogenizing discourses, it is important to insist on the great flexibility of self-positioning, identification, and membership, and on the very weak influence of these homogenizing categories on current practices.[9] If their influence is felt, at present it is only in a few associations for the defense of Peul language and culture, and in the parental linguistic politics of some Bamako families where, for example, it is forbidden to speak Bambara in the house.

6.5 Community, language, identity: homogenization at work

> *Or cette absence de communauté de destin est écrite à même la langue.*
> *Et c'est ce qui scelle sa dépossession.*
>
> (*Crépon 2000: 191*)

The concepts of identity, community, or language, whether they are used in politics or legitimated by scientists, the media, writers, and so on, cannot be dissociated from their recent construction in the history of the political constitution of nations and languages in nineteenth century Europe. The discursive effects of this categorization also mark the sociolinguistic work that takes up the paradigm of identity and ethnicity through notions such as sociolinguistic (and now ethno-linguistic) community, or the concept of "variety." Even though recent scholarship questions notions of language, community, and identity, it has not given rise to any real methodology or theory. The interdependence of variety, (ethno-linguistic) community and identity is considered a fact, even though it is based on a construct and responds only to the polyphonic complexity of discourses that are legitimated by power (of the media, politics, the university) as it circulates within society. Such an equation is commonplace today in Europe, and some might think it incongruous to question it again. My goal here is to bring it back to its discursive context in order to reflect on its scientific usage.

If interest in the discourses of identity continues to grow because those discourses attest to the unprecedented evolution of the appropriation of political categories, which, as many anthropologists have shown, is a direct consequence of the phenomenon of globalization, then my task is to review them in light of the political, social, and media discourses which determine their construction.

6.5.1 Language: the great impensé *of linguistics*[10]

The culturalist principle appears extremely attractive in the resolution of social conflicts since it brings the subject back to the binary and reassuring opposition of sameness: our language versus another's language, our group, our nation, our community versus another, and so on. This accomplishes a "type of race in which the dominators try to appropriate the properties of the dominated" (Bourdieu 1982: 160). Thus it obviates, for researchers as well as politicians, the need to be engaged in social or political reflection.[11] In France, the problem of immigration is continually explained in terms of origin, culture, ethnicity, and mastery of the French language, focusing on young French people, the children of

immigrants—who more often than not know nothing about their parents' country of origin—thereby avoiding the social dimension (problems of housing, transport, unemployment, schooling, poverty, ghettoization, and violence). As for so-called minorities, such as the Rom, they are relegated to the domains of culture and folklore, their stigmatized identity an excuse for exercising tight political control over them.

The desire to belong to an imagined group, to be connected to others (Brubaker 2004: 47), or the feeling of speaking "one" language, experienced through a difference between one's way of speaking and another's, is a real process of the relationship to linguistic practices. Yet, it is only the plurality and the multiplicity of these positions which condition the absence of any fixed boundaries: on one hand, the majority of criteria which lead to this circumscription are only valid for the individual speaker and do not refer to any objectivity, while on the other this great variability prevents the isolation of a single idiolect since the perceived differences with one's neighbor, fellow villager, person from a neighboring village, involves varying degrees of linguistic pinpointing (phonetic, morphological, syntactic, discursive, and communicative).

The epistemological question is therefore one of boundaries: where does a language begin and where does it end? And it in turn leads to another question: Are the boundaries constructed by structuralism legitimate? My observations show that scientifically there is no system or diasystem, but rather a collection of arrangements, of mixed linguistic variations that are constantly in movement along a continuum. Defining homogenous entities within this variation is always subjective, but influenced by previous attempts to do the same.

Describing *parole,* then, rather than *langue*, from its primordial heterogeneous dynamic is the objective of my approach. I have shown how this reverse approach leads to a different analysis of linguistic practices in Mali. By refusing to conceptualize linguistic practices as systematically inscribed on constructed and pre-categorized objects, and by describing them instead from the perspective of their plurality, another reality emerges.

Notes

1 Translated by John Field and Fiona Mc Laughlin.

2 I use this designation, which respects local usage but which is different from designations such as Bambara and Malinke, for example, in order to focus on linguistic practices. With regard to the French name for groups or languages, we use the invariable forms.

3 While the use of statistics helps to elucidate certain trends in usage, it does little to shed light on the dynamics of multilingualism which is the real object of this study.

4 This observation comes from an anthropological approach which involves observing the speaker over a long period of time and in all possible speech situations. Only qualitative research, which focuses on interactive speech with all its complexities, can produce relevant interpretations. Speech processes along the interactions and in it complexity, permit to produce pertinent interpretations.
5 I refer here to the my previous work on families in Songhay, Peul, Tamasheq, and Mandingo zones (Canut 1996).
6 Originally, 10 languages were declared national languages by the constitution of Mali (Bambara/Mandingo, Songhay, Peul, Tamasheq, Maure, Khassonké, Bobo, Dogon, Bozo, and Soninké). Three more languages were added later: Minyanka, Senufo, and Malinké, by statutory order /01 N°96-/AN-RM, adopted by the constitution in 1996.
7 Although things can, of course, change very quickly, my data from 1992 to 2004 shows a big discrepancy between the frequency of epilinguistic discourse in the cities as opposed to the villages.
8 In almost all interviews conducted in France on the relationship between language and individual, the word "identity" emerges at some point. This was not the case in Mali.
9 Similar observations are made by Juillard (2005: 203) for Ziguinchor in Senegal.
10 This term comes from Sériot (1997).
11 Conversely, some researchers reproduce the dominant model when they defend "minorities" (by presenting the difference in order to reassert its value in the hierarchization of the values supplied by the dominant model), which only reinforces existing notions of homogeneity. Even if it emerges from a "good feeling," examples such as Labov's political engagement on behalf of Black Americans, or the defense of France's regional languages, perpetuate the culturalist basis of the social sciences which reduce a group to one and only one language or a variety.

7 The multiple facets of the urban language form, Nouchi

Sabine Kube-Barth

7.1 Introduction

The present volume introduces various scientific approaches to analyzing the evolution of urban languages in Africa. The perspective chosen in this article is based on the analysis of the discourse of a group of speakers of the hybrid urban language, Nouchi, spoken in Abidjan in Côte d'Ivoire, on their language use. It will be shown that the adopted methodology can provide interesting perspectives on the reasons for the emergence of urban language varieties and on their possible future development.

The present analysis draws from the fact that reflecting about languages and language use is not a privilege of linguists only. Especially in highly multilingual and potentially conflictual settings, the speakers themselves think about the linguistic situation they live with and contribute to. They have a certain knowledge about the languages they and others around them speak, know about different varieties of a language and of how the languages are valued by other speakers, and so on.[1] Given that linguistic factors have complex implications for identity, communication, social integration and participation, education and development, the speakers' opinions and thoughts on the current linguistic situation, its future evolution and possible improvements are crucial. The discussion of the *problème linguistique* (linguistic problem) in Abidjan and Côte d'Ivoire in general is very much present not only in public discourse (media, writers, teachers, etc.) but also frequently discussed by the speakers, that is, students.

The following elements are based on research data collected in 2002 during a 9-month field stay in Abidjan. The data are derived from 35 semi-directive interviews of 60–90 minutes length each with students of secondary schools in the city. The interviews addressed the following four main thematic areas:

1) language use in everyday life: Ivorian languages—French—Nouchi;
2) the students' attitudes regarding the various components of Abidjan's multilingualism;

3) the students' evaluation of the current linguistic situation and the official language policy;
4) the students' suggestions and ideas for possible changes and evolution of the linguistic situation and future measures in the language policy of the country.

The statements of the students offer interesting perspectives for further exploring the role played by the urban hybrid language form Nouchi in the multilingual setting of Abidjan. Nouchi appears as a serious alternative for speakers caught between French, the only language with official status in Côte d'Ivoire and the language of the former colonial power, and their indigenous languages which do not benefit from an official status and are being used less and less in everyday communication in the multiethnic city.

7.2 The linguistic situation in Abidjan: a particular setting favorable to the development of Nouchi

Abidjan, the largest city and economic centre of Côte d'Ivoire, is a particularly interesting place to study language development and language change in African urban postcolonial settings. The city is home to more than three million people, about 20 percent of the overall population of Côte d'Ivoire. The important process of urbanization in Côte d'Ivoire in the last 20 years is due to massive migration from rural areas and from neighboring countries, especially Burkina Faso and Mali. Thirty percent of Abidjan's population are foreigners, and the inhabitants of Ivorian nationality belong to the about 60 Ivorian ethnic groups.

This multiethnic population brings with it a high linguistic diversity.[2] French has been the official language of the country since independence in 1960 and thus the language dominating all official domains of language use. Compared to other big urban centers in Africa, such as for instance Dakar, Bamako, and Nairobi, where interethnic communication is ensured by an African language—Wolof in Dakar, Bambara in Bamako, Kiswahili in Nairobi—none of the Ivorian languages could impose itself as lingua franca in Abidjan. Instead, a local variety of French is playing this role in most of the everyday communication of Abidjan's population. Linguistic studies, however, noticed very early that this frequent use of the foreign language in everyday communication—in contact with a variety of African languages and by many speakers who did not benefit from structured language learning through schooling—had quickly lead to a high degree of language variation and the development of various local varieties of French.

Nouchi is the most recently developed variety of Ivorian French. The hybrid language form takes its morphosyntactic frame from French (mainly *français populaire*[3]) whereas its lexicon is highly heterogenous. Nouchi borrows a lot of words from various Ivorian languages, such as Dioula, Baule, and Bete and from English, and its speakers are especially creative in inventing new terms. In addition, several strategies of language manipulation are particularly prominent in Nouchi, such as morphological hybridization by attaching French or English suffixes to borrowed words from different non-French sources.[4] Nouchi started as a secret language of street children but quickly found more and more speakers among the younger population of Abidjan. Today it has its own website and satirical newspapers and enjoys broader acceptance in all social classes.

7.3 Students as important actors of language change

The sociolinguistic study undertaken in the framework of my research in Abidjan in 2002 focused on a group of students aged 15–22 years in three different public secondary schools. It became obvious that students are of particular interest for a study on language use and language attitudes with special focus on the functions of Nouchi in the multilingual setting in Abidjan. The population of Abidjan is very young. Following the last census of 2001, 66 percent of the inhabitants of Abidjan are under 25 (INS 2001: 20).

Students in secondary schools of course form a privileged part of the society. Although Côte d'Ivoire currently has a gross enrolment ratio in primary education of 72 percent,[5] in the year 2000, only 20 percent of the students successfully completed primary school and only a small part continued in secondary education. However, this particular group is of special interest for two main reasons. First, Nouchi developed as a secret language of street children but was quickly adopted by the rest of the younger population, but students in school are also the only ones who are constantly in contact with the standard norm of French and are theoretically those with the best competence in the language. It is thus of particular interest to understand their reasons for claiming Nouchi as their favorite communication tool. Secondly, secondary students will form the future elite of Côte d'Ivoire. They reflect a lot on language use and the current language policy and may play an important role as future decision-makers in this area. The students' language use, and especially their opinions regarding the current linguistic situation in Abidjan, the official language policy and furthermore their proposals or

ideas for the future development of Abidjan's multilingualism are thus of specific interest and provide important insights to the complex set of factors influencing language choice and language change.

Thirty-five students from three public secondary schools in Abidjan were chosen for longer interviews of 60–90 minutes. The students were interviewed in small groups of two or three which allowed interesting debates among them.

Two of the selected schools, the *Lycée Municipal Yopougon* and the *Lycée d'Attécoubé*, were located in the popular neighborhoods of Yopougon and Attécoubé where mainly middle-class families and poorer social classes choose to live. The third school, the *Lycée Classique*, is the elite public secondary school of Abidjan which selects its students from all parts of the city on the basis of school results. It is located in the "white neighbourhood" of Abidjan where foreign Embassies and cultural institutions have their residencies and where Abidjan's university and Academy of Arts and the public radio and television stations are located.[6]

One hundred and fifty-six students from the three schools had previously answered a questionnaire on their language use which aimed at investigating individual bi- and multilingualism and language use according to various domains of language use, such as the family, the neighborhood, friends, school, and so on. For the choice of the 35 students from this bigger group, it was important, besides selecting an equal representation of age groups and girls and boys, to consider all possible constellations observed in the questionnaires—students with an African language dominating in the family and those who had already grown up with French only, those in favor of and those against Nouchi, and so on. Working as an assistant teacher of German in the three schools during my field stay in Côte d'Ivoire and living with an Ivorian family in Yopougon, I knew all students personally before interviewing them. This allowed for a relaxed and informal setting for the interviews and gave lots of opportunities for participant observation in classrooms, teachers' rooms, and meetings, in the school yard during breaks, in the neighborhood, and so on.

7.4 The main functions attributed to Nouchi by students

Previous publications on Nouchi (i.e. Kouadio 1991; Lafage 1996; 1998) categorize the language form mainly as an argot or youth language. They interpret the large spreading of Nouchi on the one hand as a sign of the successful appropriation of French by African speakers for their own communicative needs (Lafage 1991: 104) and on the other as an

indication for the decrease in language competence in French among students who somehow need to resort to this language form without the strict grammatical rules of standard French. In a comparative study of African urban youth languages, including Nouchi, Kiessling and Mous (2004) highlight several sociocultural functions common to these language codes. According to the authors, and joining the above-mentioned findings of Kouadio and Lafage regarding Nouchi, their role is first of all to mark group identity of urban youth through distancing this social group from the older generation, from the rural population and from the upper social classes (Kiessling and Mous 2004: 11). The authors do however also note several specificities of African youth languages, compared for instance to those created by youth in Europe, and which derive directly from the specific sociocultural and political context in Africa:

> African urban youth languages must be seen as linguistic responses to the postcolonial situation, where there is no relationship whatsoever between historically rooted identity and the nation-states of Africa. They are strategies to construct new meaning in society by creating new identities, a new cultural community, by building on resources and growing a linguistic identity "organically", appropriating colonial languages by creative manipulation and developing "new solidarities that cut across the 'ethnic absolutism' of dominant ideologies (Harris & Rampton 2002: 44). (Kiessling and Mous 2004: 29)

The comments of the students interviewed in Abidjan go in exactly this direction. They prove again that, given the wide spread of Nouchi after its first use in the 1980s, its acceptance and use in a much larger part of the Abidjan and larger Ivorian population, especially in the Ivorian context where French is not a neutral language, categorizations have to be done more carefully. The ambiguous relation of the young people toward French—the language of the colonial power still seen as the property of the French people and as a threat to the Ivorian languages but on the other hand already often the only language used by the pupils—is at the heart of the problematic current language situation as described by the students interviewed. The functions they attribute to Nouchi therefore go beyond those of youth languages. It could be shown that, in addition to analyzing the linguistic features of the hybrid urban language, other perspectives needed to be taken into account to understand the reasons for the emergence and spread of this kind of language form, especially in urban settings in Africa. As already mentioned, the interviews with the 35 students in Abidjan afforded interesting insights into how they justify their language use and especially the evolution and spreading of Nouchi in Abidjan and the whole country.

Three main functions attributed to Nouchi by the students will be detailed in the following sections.[7]

7.4.1 Nouchi as a medium of interethnic communication

In the opinions of the students interviewed, Nouchi is today, for communicative reasons, a language form which has become indispensable in the language spectrum of Côte d'Ivoire. It serves communicative functions which cannot be fulfilled by any other language. Two main reasons are given by the students for the development of Nouchi as a medium of interethnic communication: the absence of a common African language because the number of African languages in Côte d'Ivoire is high and none of these languages is spoken by a part of the population important enough to develop as vehicular language as in other African countries. Secondly, the illiteracy rate in French still being high and the number of people having access to good quality education in French being low, French is not spoken by the majority of the population as vehicular language.

Nouchi may thus solve a communication problem:

> *Le nouchi est né parce que tous les habitants ne pouvaient pas parler le français soutenu et parce qu'il n'y a pas de langue commune.*
> Nouchi developed because not all Ivorians could communicate in standard French and because we do not share one language.
>
> *Nous nous comprenons plus avec le nouchi parce que les langues maternelles ne sont pas les mêmes.*
> We understand each other better with Nouchi because our mother tongues are not the same.
>
> *En fait, le problème du nouchi, on veut permettre à tout le monde de se faire comprendre. Ça, c'est le premier objectif.*
> Finally, the problem of Nouchi, we want to allow everybody to communicate and to make himself understood. That's the main objective.
>
> *Le français, c'est pas tout le monde qui comprend le français. Alors que le nouchi, bon, je suis convaincu que tout le monde comprend le nouchi en Côte d'Ivoire.*
> French, it's not everyone who understands French. But Nouchi, I am sure everybody understands Nouchi in Côte d'Ivoire.

In numerous studies, French is given as the vehicular language of Côte d'Ivoire, with the specification however, that the language used in everyday communication by speakers of various ethnic background is

rarely a standard French (Kouadio 2000: 199). It becomes clear from the arguments of the students quoted above that the language they are referring to when using the term *Nouchi* is a vernacular French used by the Ivorians in the street, in everyday conversation, a variety of French that can be learned by everybody without formal schooling—a language use which approaches more the *français populaire* than Nouchi in its original cryptic form as a youth language. When they speak about *French*, they are referring to the standard variety taught in school.[8]

7.4.2 Nouchi as a future national language

According to the evaluation of the students, Nouchi not only fulfils the pragmatic function of a medium of interethnic communication but it also develops in a linguistic context where the speakers are looking for a language form which expresses Ivorian identity. When analyzing the development of Nouchi in 1997, Calvet already highlighted this important feature of Nouchi—for him the Ivorian language par excellence (Calvet 1997: 33). In the questionnaires and interviews, the students often referred to Nouchi as the *langue nationale ivoirienne*—the Ivorian national language. Following their argumentation, several criteria have to be fulfilled by a language to serve as a national language: it should be a language enabling interethnic communication which is understood and mastered by the majority of the population; a language recognized by the outside world as specifically Ivorian and a genuine Ivorian language:

> *Je crois qu'on doit avoir une langue propre à la Côte d'Ivoire. Comme par exemple les Français, c'est leur langue le français, les Allemands, c'est leur langue l'allemand. Mais nous, on a pris la langue de nos colonisateurs.*
> I think we do need our own language in Côte d'Ivoire. Like for example the French people, French is their language, or the Germans, German is their language. But we adopted the language of our colonizers.

> *Chez les autres, les Sénégalais par exemple, ils vont parler le wolof. Quand on va partir [. . .], on va apprendre le wolof puisque la majorité parle le wolof. Mais si un Sénégalais vient en Côte d'Ivoire, il n'aura pas de problème, il va vite s'adapter à notre pays quoi puisqu'on n'a pas de langue maternelle comme langue officielle, donc, il va seulement parler le français, c'est pas chic, on n'a pas d'identité quoi, ça nous manque.*
> Others, the Senegalese for instance, they speak Wolof. When we're going to go to Senegal, we would learn Wolof because the majority of the people speak it. But when a Senegalese comes to Côte d'Ivoire,

> there wouldn't be any problem, he would quickly adapt because we do not have a mother tongue as official language. He would only speak French. That's not nice, we do not have our own identity, that's something we're missing.

It was obvious for the students that French, the language promoted by the official language policy in Côte d'Ivoire since independence as the only official language of the country, does not correspond to these criteria: it is not spoken or understood by the majority of the population, it would not be the language of the Ivorians only and it is not an Ivorian language:

> *Le français, c'est pas tout le monde qui comprend le français [en Côte d'Ivoire].*
> French, it's not everyone who understands French [in Côte d'Ivoire.]

> *Le français n'est pas une langue ivoirienne. Ce sont les colons qui ont envoyé le français ici.*
> French is not an Ivorian language. It's the colonizers who sent French here.

> *Je voudrais une langue qui serait restreint à la Côte d'Ivoire. Le français est parlé au Mali, au Sénégal, partout, partout.*
> I would like a language which would be restricted to Côte d'Ivoire. French is spoken in Mali, in Senegal, everywhere, everywhere.

On the other hand, students discussed the possibility of choosing one of the Ivorian languages as the national language but concluded that such a political decision would lead to protests and ethnic rivalries.

For the students, the alternative option was therefore again Nouchi: It is understood and spoken by the majority of the Ivorians; it is typically Ivorian, was "invented" by Ivorians, is the property of the Ivorians and it exists only in Côte d'Ivoire and is identified with Côte d'Ivoire by outsiders.

> *Le nouchi est né pour pouvoir nous unir, c'est-à-dire pour qu'on ait une seule langue comme code et non le français qui nous a été impose.*
> Nouchi developed to unify us, to allow us to have one single language as medium of communication and not French which has been imposed on us.

> *Moi, je pense qu'on doit se battre pour que le nouchi devienne la langue nationale parce qu'on a trop tendance à copier sur les occidentaux.*
> I think that we should fight to have Nouchi as our national language because we have too much of a tendency to copy westerners.

7.4.3 Nouchi as an indicator of the failure of Côte d'Ivoire's language policy in education

The interviews also revealed one last important reason why Nouchi developed so quickly, especially among students. They were not mainly looking for a youth language to differentiate themselves from adults but for a language form to solve problems caused by the dominance of French in all domains of their language use. A high level of competence in French (in the form of its standard variety) is essential to social and professional development in today's Côte d'Ivoire.

As highlighted in the introduction, because of the particular linguistic situation prevailing in Abidjan, French is clearly the main medium of communication of the students. However, the variety of French they are familiar with and use—often as the only medium of communication in their families and in their everyday life—differs greatly from the variety promoted as standard and norm at school. In the reasoning of the students, the development of Nouchi and the positive attitudes of students toward this language form appear as a direct result of the school reality. The free and uncontrolled communication which is possible in Nouchi serves as compensation for this pressure which results in linguistic insecurity on the part of students.

The concept of linguistic insecurity goes back to studies undertaken by Labov in the early 1970s. He observed linguistic insecurity among lower middle-class speakers of English keen to adopt ways of speaking of the highest social classes and to disavow those of the lower social classes from which they may have come or fear that they might be associated with. The concept has been widely used in the sociolinguistic research on French in Africa. The spreading of French on all continents has always been combined with strong centralizing tendencies and the promotion of a standard variety as the only norm dominating all other existing varieties. Constant norm discussions did and do influence language attitudes of "non-legitimate" speakers of French in a particular way. In the context of French as an international language, linguistic insecurity can be observed when speakers know about the existence of different varieties of the language and when the speakers feel or think that their language use does not correspond to what is promoted as normative speaking. A speaker would have linguistic security either when speaking the language variety promoted as the norm or when not being aware of the existence of differences (Klinkenberg 1993).

As the norm is, in particular, promoted by the school in francophone Africa, African students are easily subject to linguistic insecurity. Students who use French in domains where the use of the standard is expected are more likely to experience and feel linguistic insecurity

than speakers using varieties of French only in everyday life (Ploog 2002: 44). As already highlighted by Labov, indicators for linguistic insecurity in language use are a tendency to hypercorrection and frequent mixing of styles or varieties, both of which could also be observed in the language use of the students interviewed in Abidjan. Linguistic insecurity was however even more present in the self-evaluation of the students. They constantly evaluated their own language competence in French as bad or insufficient and they did not see themselves as "owners" or legitimate speakers of French:

> *Les jeunes voulaient une langue après le français pour se sentir plus à l'aise.*
> Young people wanted a language other than French to feel comfortable.

> [*Je parle le nouchi*] *parce que je ne maîtrise pas bien le français et pour parler aisément.*
> [I speak Nouchi] because I do not speak French well and to speak with more ease.

> *Le nouchi, c'est pas comme le français, il n'y a pas de censure. On laisse libre cours à la parole.*
> Nouchi, it's not like French, there is no censorship. You speak without any constraints.

What makes the situation of the students in Abidjan even more complicated is the fact that, in addition to their linguistic insecurity regarding the French language, the students often mentioned complexes about using their Ivorian languages. As the languages are less and less used in the families, the students esteem not to learn and master them correctly. The students describe a vicious cycle experienced by lots of young people growing up in urban areas in Africa. In the questionnaires and interviews, the majority of students evaluated their own competence in the Ivorian mother tongues as bad, which in turn leads to identity conflicts.[9]

This particular problem has of course its origin in the Ivorian education system which is based on French only, and especially in the way of teaching French. In the last few years, linguists and educationalists have been promoting an approach to teaching French in francophone Africa which would better reflect the currently prevailing linguistic situation, especially in urban centers, thereby allowing African students to better succeed in school and better cope with the situation described above in which French already dominates their linguistic everyday life. Reforms in curricula, teaching methods, teaching material, and teacher training are urgent.[10]

7.5 Conclusion

Kiessling and Mous highlight in the conclusion of their already mentioned analysis of various African urban youth languages that "youth act as catalysts in the promotion of non-normative forms of (ex-colonial) languages as media of wider horizontal communication in the cities, a contribution highly relevant to the development of modern African nation states" (Kiessling and Mous 2006: 374). As shown in this article, these language forms may even be able to play a more important role. The last word on the development of the linguistic situation in African urban areas and especially on the changing of current language policies in Africa—favoring the ex-colonial languages and disregarding the African local languages—is not yet spoken.

Rapid urbanization in the last 20 or 30 years is a common feature of many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Between the years 1950 and 2000, the urban populations of less developed regions have grown faster than those of more developed regions, with the highest rates of urban population growth recorded, among others, in the regions of Africa. As a result, the urban population of East Africa increased from just three million persons in 1950 to 61 million in 2000, and that of Western Africa increased nearly fifteen-fold, rising from 6 million in 1950 to 88 million in 2000. With 37 percent of its population living in urban areas in 2000, Africa is still considerably less urbanized than other continents and, consequently, is expected to experience rapid rates of urbanization during 2000–2030. It is expected that by 2030, 53 percent of the African population will live in urban areas (UN 2002). Current language use in African cities and the accompanying evaluations and attitudes may therefore become decisive for very necessary future changes in language policy in Africa.

It is hoped that the approach developed in this article may serve as one example for showing the central role that sociolinguistic perspectives can play in analyzing the changes and challenges that accompany the rapid urbanization of Africa.

Notes

1 The study of the interdependences between language use and the accompanying attitudes and evaluations has become an important domain of current sociolinguistic research. For an overview and discussion of the various terms used we refer to Schlieben-Lange 1983 and Tanzmeister 1994.

2 The distribution of first languages in the school classes I observed in Abidjan may serve as an illustration for this multilingualism: class of *Terminale* (last grade of secondary school), Lycée Municipale Yopougon (LMY), 30 students,

14 different languages as first languages, a maximum of 5 students share 1 language; *Troisième*, LMY, 49 students, 15 different languages as first languages; *Première*, Lycée Municipale Attécoubé (LMA), 26 students, 15 languages; *Seconde*, Lycée Classique Cocody (LCC), 38 students, 16 languages; *Terminale*, LCC, 12 students, 8 languages.

3 "Français populaire" is the term commonly used for the local variety of Ivorian French which developed already in the early 1970s especially among speakers who did use the language in everyday communication but had not learned it in school. For more details, see the early work of Duponchel (1979) and Lafage (1983; 1986).

4 For examples and a detailed analysis of the linguistic features of Nouchi, see Kouadio (1991), Kube (2005a or b), and Kiessling and Mous (2006). A lot of samples can also be found on the following web pages: www.nouchi.com—an interactive online dictionary—and www.gbichonline.com—a satirical weekly newspaper published in Abidjan.

5 This most recent figure was taken from UNESCO's Global Monitoring Report 2008 and is based on national estimates for the school year ending in 2003. The gross enrolment ratio in primary education refers to the total enrolment, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the official age group corresponding to this level of education. The figure can exceed 100 percent due to early or late entry and/or grade repetition.

6 The 35 students—16 girls and 19 boys—were 15–22 years old and studied in four different classes from *Troisième* (fourth of the seven grades of secondary schools) to *Terminale* (last grade).

7 For a more detailed analysis of the questionnaires and a more comprehensive picture of the students' evaluation of the linguistic situation in Abidjan, see Kube (2005a, b).

8 Both in the questionnaires and in the interviews, the students used a great variety of terms to speak about their language use, to describe the language reality in Côte d'Ivoire. These terms and distinctions of course often do not match with the scientific categories developed by linguists for defining the linguistic situation in Côte d'Ivoire. Two clear oppositions exist for the students: the French of Côte d'Ivoire as different from the French of France and the French taught in school in Côte d'Ivoire as different from the French spoken at home. Nouchi is often used in parallel with *français local* and *français populaire* referring to the variety of French spoken in everyday life, by all social classes. The term is not restricted any longer to the secret language of street children or the sociolect of Abidjan's youth. For more details, see Kube (2005a: 236–46).

9 This particular case of such "bilingual linguistic insecurity" has been described in detail by Bretegnier (1996; 2002) based on a study in Réunion.

10 For further detail and pedagogical implications, see Kube (2003) and Kube (2005a) and further references to the current discussion provided in these two publications.

8 On assessing the ethnolinguistic vitality of Ga in Accra[1]

James Essegbey

8.1 Introduction

Accra, the capital city of Ghana has witnessed a steep increase in population since the close of the nineteenth century. The main reason for this increase has been immigration. On April 28, 2005, the Ga Traditional Council organized a demonstration to demand what they termed "justice." One of the placards carried by the demonstrators read "Do not kill our language." The language in question was Ga, the indigenous language of Accra.[2] This might come as a surprise to some people who have not been to Accra because, up until the end of the 1980s, students in boarding houses in secondary schools across the country found it appealing to learn Ga. The city was then the place where "interesting" students spent their vacation. Thus even those students who did not have the opportunity to visit Accra learned the Ga language from their colleagues in school so that they could pass for spending time there.

However, the Ga have for some time now been expressing concerns that their language is ceding its dominance in their homeland to Akan. This issue has been discussed extensively by Dakubu (1997; 2005a, b) who has done much research on the linguistic situation of Accra. In earlier publications (cf. Dakubu 1997; 2005a) she argues that Ga is under no threat from Akan. However in a later paper, Dakubu (2005b: 52) writes: "Akan, not Ga, has become the lingua franca in Accra."

In this chapter I assess the ethnolinguistic vitality of Ga using the three variables provided by Giles et al. (1997), that is, status, demography, and institutional support. I offer explanations for why the Ga would feel that their language is under threat from Akan. I argue that when Dakubu's earlier study (Dakubu 1997) is seen from the angle of a distinction between the traditional Ga area and what I refer to as "the sprawl area," one will see the seat of the discontent: the sprawl area. To support my claim, I draw on the responses given in sample surveys carried out in 2005 and 2007.

The chapter is organized as follows: in Section 8.2, I describe the two surveys which I carried out in Accra. Section 8.3 discusses the variables

of ethnolinguistic vitality as proposed by Giles et al. (1977), and how factors given by Landweer (2000) to explain the vitality of Papuan languages fit into them. Section 8.4 looks at how Ga is affected by virtue of it being situated in an urban setting. Here I oppose traditional Ga townships to the sprawl area. Section 8.5 discusses the different ethnolinguistic groups in Accra while Section 8.6 looks at the main cause of the Ga worry, which is institutional support. Section 8.7 concludes the chapter.

8.2 Surveys

In order to find out about people's language attitudes in Accra, I conducted a sample survey in July 2005. In all I interviewed 21 people from different ethnolinguistic groups, comprising 3 Ga, 5 Akan, 3 Ewe, 4 Dagomba, 1 Moore (from Burkina Faso but living in Accra), 2 Tem (also known as Kotokoli from Central Togo but also living in Accra), 1 Nyagbo, 1 Krobo, and 1 Builsa. Two of them were professors and one was a janitor at the University of Ghana, three were nurses at the Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital, together with one technician and one security man at the same place. Two were researchers at the Center for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), together with one secretary, one librarian and one security man from the same place. There were also four porters, one self-employed mason, one corn-miller, and two vulcanizers. Notably, none of these people lived in the traditional Ga townships which I discuss in Section 8.4. Among the topics on which I questioned them were their ethnicity, the languages they spoke at home and at work, whether they ever spent a day without speaking their native language, Akan, or Ga, which language they would address a total stranger in, and which language they would want their children to acquire first. I conducted the sample survey myself and so was able to ask the respondents why they gave certain answers to certain questions. Some of the answers are given below.

In the summer of 2007, I had a second survey conducted, this time, of 40 people. Of these respondents, 18 were Akans, 9 were Ga, and 13 came from other ethnic groups, one of which was from Nigeria and another from Sierra Leone. Unlike the first sample survey, this one was administered for me by a research assistant and, although the questions that the people had to answer were the same, the assistant did not ask follow-up questions as to why they gave particular answers.

8.3 Ethnolinguistic vitality

Giles et al. (1977) define ethnolinguistic vitality as that which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in

intergroup situations. They identify status, demographics, and institutional support as the variables that are likely to affect the vitality of an ethnolinguistic group. They write:

> The status variables are those which pertain to a configuration of prestige variables of the linguistic group in the intergroup context. The more status a linguistic group is recognized to have, the more vitality it can be said to possess as a collective entity. The Demographic variables are those related to the sheer numbers of group members and their distribution throughout the territory. Ethnolinguistic groups whose demographic trends are favorable are more likely to have vitality as distinctive groups than those whose demographic trends are unfavorable and not conducive to group survival. Institutional support variables refer to the extent to which a language group receives formal support and informal representation in the various institutions of a nation, region or community. (Giles et al. 1977: 388)

Studies have been conducted on how ethnolinguistic vitality variables determine whether or not a language will become moribund. Landweer (2000) for instance, noting that languages do not necessarily die as a result of people dying but often from a shift in allegiance by its speakers to another language, identifies eight factors which, according to her, are the indicators of the ethnolinguistic vitality of the languages in the Papua New Guinea region. These are

1) Position of the speech community on the remote-urban continuum
2) Domains in which the target language is used
3) Frequency and type of code-switching
4) Population and group dynamics
5) Distribution of speakers within their own social network
6) Social outlook regarding and within the speech community
7) Language prestige
8) Access to a stable and acceptable economic base

Regarding the above factors, Landweer (2000: 6) writes:

> No one factor has become a leading indicator of linguistic vitality. Whether a language appears to be "maintained" or "dying" depends on the collective impact of positive or negative indicators that place the language on a continuum of stable vitality, change in process due to other-language interference, radical shift in process, and death. As such, language maintenance and shift are long-term consequences of consistent patterns of language choice throughout the speech community.

When we look at Landweer's factors in terms of Giles et al.'s variables, we notice that position of the speech community on the remote-urban continuum (1), population and group dynamics (4), and distribution of speakers within their own social network (5) constitute demographic variables. Domains in which the target language is used (2) represent institutional support while language prestige (7) represents status. In what follows I discuss how Ga fares with regard to each of these factors. I do not discuss frequency and type of code-switching (3) and access to stable and acceptable economic base (8).

8.4 Position of the speech community on the remote-urban continuum

Landweer identifies position of the speech community on the remote-urban continuum as the first criterion of linguistic vitality. According to this criterion languages that are located in an urban area are most likely to be endangered while those that are remote and have little or no contact with an urban center have the highest vitality. The Ga do not fare well in this domain since theirs is the main urban center of Ghana. Dakubu (1997) reports that all the languages along the West African coast from Ivory Coast to Nigeria can be found in Accra. There is therefore the potential for Ga speakers to come into contact with speakers of several languages although, for reasons that I outline below, only Akan is of concern to them. The location of Accra also presents a peculiar problem for the Ga language. Dakubu (1997: 30) points out that for most cities along the coast, the hinterland to the north has made a crucial difference, according to whether or not it represented a reservoir of speakers of an indigenous language of the town. In contrast, Accra (including Tema township) is bordered by people who speak different languages: on the north by the Akan speaking Akuapim, on the west by the Guans, and on the east by the Adangbe. Of the three only Adangbe is closely related to Ga.

As I stated in the introduction, the cause for the increase in the population of Accra is immigration. What the above suggests is that this immigration is mainly of non-Ga speakers. As the immigrants increase the population of the city of Accra, they expand its geographic limits. Grant and Yankson (2003: 66) describe the situation thus:

> One visible expression of [population] growth is the spatial expansion of the city's limits over time. In the 1870s the area of less than 10 km^2 consisted of the townships of James Town, Christianborg and Ussher Town. The present Greater Accra Metropolitan area (GAMA) comprises the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA) area with 57% of the GAMA population, Tema Municipal Assembly

(TMA) area with 17% and the Ga District Assembly (GDA) area with 26% of the GAMA population. Of the three administrative districts, AMA is the most completely urbanized and largely constitutes the city of Accra.

The three administrative areas can be found on the map which I provide below.

Grant and Yankson describe the limits of the city of Accra as "bounded by the Gulf of Guinea in the south, by the University of Ghana in the north, by the Tema township in the east and by the Korle Lagoon in the west." They add that "the built-up area's dimensions are about 25 km east to west and about 12 km north to south." Note however that while Grant and Yankson place the northern border of the city of Accra at Legon, the built-up area does not end there. It extends to a barrier at a place known as Adenta, which is about 10 kilometer from Legon. The Korle Lagoon does not represent a boundary for Accra either as there is a bridge across it that connects built-up areas beyond it. In fact, the built-up area to the west extends as far as Weija, a place that is approximately 20 kilometer from the Korle Lagoon. Finally, while there are some marshlands separating Accra and Tema to the east, these are not wide enough to constitute borders. Accra, in a non-technical sense, has therefore grown beyond its traditional borders and absorbed suburbs that were once independent townships.

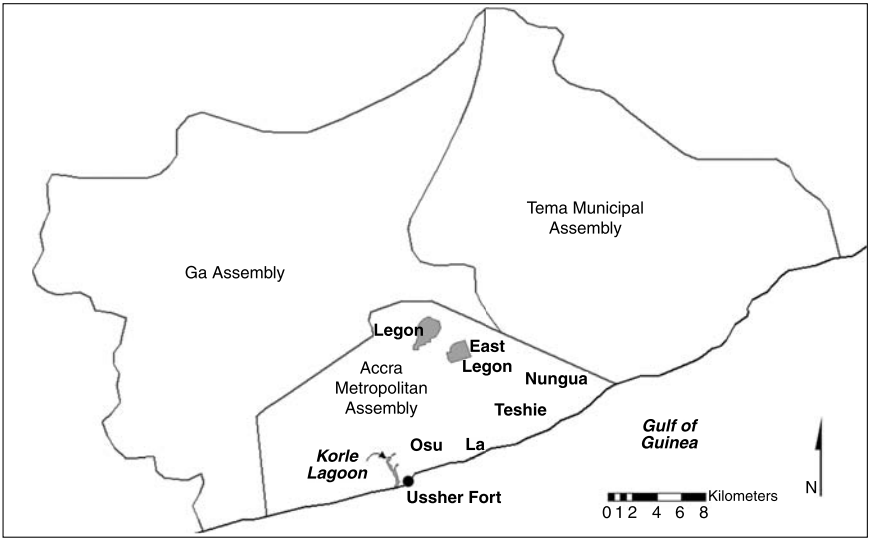

Figure 8.1 The Greater Accra Metropolitan Area

As the city expands, its outcome can be divided into the Ga areas and what I call the sprawl areas. The former consists of the traditional Ga township which lies between Ussher Fort and the Korle Lagoon, followed by Osu, La, Teshie, and Nungua to the east. All of these townships are bounded to the south by the Gulf of Guinea, thereby preventing a southward expansion. While all these areas are majority Ga, the population at the center is more Ga than the outlying areas. For instance, Dakubu (1997) reports a survey conducted of 20 households in Osu which showed that only 53 percent were native Ga. As one moves away from these coastal townships, one leaves the areas of Ga majority.

The picture that one gets of the city, therefore, is one of heavy Ga-populated townships along the coast, with a decreasing Ga population as one leaves these townships and heads inland such that by the time one gets to the outskirts of Accra, the Ga constitute a minority. It is important to keep in mind that the space occupied by the Ga townships is smaller than the sprawl area. Note further that the Ga from the townships are in constant contact with the people in the sprawl area as they move around the city in commuter buses known as *trotro* either to go to work, market, church, or entertainment spots. This picture is important as it shows that the sprawl areas are as important as the traditional townships in accounting for the vitality of Ga in Accra. Thus far I have talked about populations without giving figures. I turn to these in the next section.

8.5 Population and group dynamics

Landweer (2000) notes that more than one of the most commonly cited factors in the determination of the potential vitality of a language is whether it has a critical mass of speakers. Gordon (2005) gives the number of Ga speakers as 600,000. We can therefore safely say that Ga possesses a core of fluent speakers. However, in terms of percentage, the official website of the State places the percentage of the Ga population at 18.9 percent, as opposed to that of the Akan which is 39.8 percent. This means that the Ga are a minority in their homeland.

This leads to an important question which Landweer asks which is whether immigrants make the effort to acquire the native language. Dakubu's (1997) studies show that this indeed happened. A survey she conducted in 1989 in the Salaga market, which is at the heart of the Ga area, showed that 94.0 percent of 153 people said they spoke Ga, while 68 percent of them spoke Akan. In addition to these two languages, 49.7 percent spoke English, 13.1 percent spoke Ewe, 5.2 percent spoke Dangme, and 9.2 percent spoke Hausa. When questioned further on which of the languages they spoke confidently, 86.9 percent spoke Ga

confidently while only 32.0 percent said so for Akan. Regarding the other languages, 23.5 percent said they spoke English confidently, 11.8 percent spoke Ewe, 0.7 percent spoke Dangme, and 5.9 percent spoke Hausa. A later survey of 152 people in 1992 also reported in Dakubu (1997) found that 100 percent spoke Ga, 90.1 percent spoke Akan, 78.3 percent spoke English, 27.3 percent spoke Ewe, 24.3 percent spoke Dangme, and 17.1 percent spoke Hausa. The percentage of confident speakers among these were 86.8 percent for Ga, 27.3 percent for Akan, 9.2 percent for English, 13.8 percent for Ewe, 11.8 percent for Dangme, and 5.9 percent for Hausa. Based on these finding, Dakubu (1997: 56) writes:

> Despite the large numbers who claimed to speak Akan and English, Ga emerged as by far the strongest language in terms of confident speakers. Even if the differences between the 1989 and 1992 surveys were to be interpreted chronologically, as reflecting change in the pattern of multilingualism in the market and surrounding area, then Central Accra would be seen as becoming more multilingual (in the sense of acquisition of low-level competence in more languages by more people), but no other language yet posed a threat to Ga as the main community and trade language of the area.

It is clear from these surveys that a lot more of those who learn Ga take their time to learn it properly while many of those who learn the other languages probably try to get enough just to get by. Note that the Salaga market is in the traditional Ga township which, as noted above, is one of the places where the Ga have numerical superiority. As Dakubu (1997: 43) reports in her study, this area keeps a strongly "Ga-speaking character."

It can be observed from the above surveys that the percentage of speakers of Akan also went up from 68 percent to 90.1 percent in the Ga area. This raises question as to what happens when one moves out of this area. I propose that if viewed from another perspective, surveys which Dakubu conducted of the Dagaaba, Bulsa and the Kusaasi should give us an indication as to what to expect in such areas. These people lived in such areas as Nima and New Town which are to the north of the traditional Accra townships but are now in the center of the larger Accra, with Achimota and Maamobi to the north, and Abossey Okai and Sabon Zongo to the west. Table 8.1 is an adaptation of Dakubu's (1997: 79) table 4.6 of the language inventory of the three migrant groups from the north. This table is of interest because it represents languages acquired by migrants in Accra who do not live in the traditional Ga townships. It contrasts nicely with the survey reported earlier which involved respondents in a Ga enclave and included Ga indigenes. Significantly, even though Ga is acquired, it is not the majority second

Table 8.1 Reinterpreting Dakubu's report on migrant language acquisition

	Numbers of speakers in group		
	Dagaaba (n=502)	**Bulsa (n=419)**	**Kusaasi (n=227)**
A: Major community language			
Dagaare	99.0%	0.2%	3.1%
Buli	0.2%	100.0%	0.0%
Kusaal	0.6%	0.2%	96.0%
B: Major second languages			
Akan	89.9%	95.0%	81.1%
English	62.8%	62.5%	83.2%
Hausa	56.2%	98.3%	96.5%
Ga	47.2%	17.9%	79.7%

language of any of the ethnic groups. Akan is the strongest among the Dagaare and, even though it lags behind Hausa among the Bulsa and Kusaasi, it is just at the heels of Hausa among the Bulsa. The reason for the strong position of Hausa is because the greater part of Bulsa and Kusaasi interviewees lived in Nima. According to Dakubu (1997: 45) Nima began as a village of Hausa and Fulani ranchers and developed later when many former soldiers settled around Accra. It is heavily populated by immigrants from the north who tend to use Hausa.

In sum, the area along the coast of Accra has townships that contain majority speaking Ga. As one moves inland, the number of Ga indigenes decreases. While immigrants in the Ga enclaves learn the Ga language, those outside these areas are likely to target other languages. Note that as I have pointed out, Nima is located at the center of present day Accra. So if even in the center of the present city, the Ga do not have the required numbers to heavily influence the acquisition of their language, then the situation will even be worse when one moves away from the center.

8.6 Domains in which language is used

As I stated earlier, domain of language use is another way of looking at Giles et al. institutional support, both informal and formal. Landweer (2000) identifies home, cultural domains, and social events as constituting

the key areas of life. Cultural domain includes birth, funerals, and naming ceremonies while social events include work and sport. She asks whether there is sufficient use of the target language throughout community life relative to the number of language-use domains. There is no doubt that the Ga use their language among themselves at home. This can be deduced from the survey which Dakubu carried out in the Salaga market. It was also confirmed by my investigations. In the 2005 sample survey, two of the three Ga indigenes reported that they spoke the language at home everyday. The third person who was married to an Akan person said he spoke English and Akan with his wife and children. This represents a trend which I return to below. In the 2007 survey, all nine of the respondents who are Ga said they spoke the language at home everyday. We can conclude that when the unit is all Ga, the language of communication is Ga.

The cultural practices of the Ga are also vibrant. They, like all Ghanaian ethnic groups, like to celebrate their funerals, and this they do in typical Ga fashion. For instance Hampton (1982: 75) reports that there is a type of funeral song which, together with the dance of *Tarafɛɛmu* "constitute the only corpus of songs and the only dance performed for a single rite of passage by all Ga people." These typical Ga funeral traditions are performed within the Ga enclaves of Accra. In fact, the Ga are well known for blocking streets within the city so that they can perform these funerals. To a large extent, child-naming ceremonies among the Ga, known as *kpojieme* "child out-taking," also remain a Ga affair. Abarry (1997: 365) describes the ceremony as a "multifaceted communicative system through which the [Ga] people express not only their ideas of personhood, self and group identities, but the world view, aesthetics, creativity, moral, social, and religious values as well." There is also the *Homowo* festival which is an annual harvest celebrated by the Ga. All of these attest to the vibrancy of the Ga culture.

The Homowo celebration is not without its detractors. Kilson (1991) observes that while it is celebrated by all Ga, those who consider themselves to be Christians refrain from joining in. Dakubu (2005b: 52) explains that this is because "the majority of [charismatic and Pentecostal] churches, which attract large numbers from all walks of life, are very intolerant of traditional practices of all kinds, including some such as traditional styles of praying that were more or less tolerated by the more 'mainstream' churches, and do their best to keep their followers away from them, with a fair degree of success." In the last few years, these churches have begun to defy a traditional ban on drumming and noise-making in the weeks preceding the celebration of the Homowo. While the mainstream churches put away their drums and musical instruments during this time and simply clap their hands during church

service, the Charismatic and Pentecostal churches refuse to heed the ban and continue with their music as usual. This has led to confrontations between the churches and some Ga people who insist that their traditions be respected.

The issue has been complicated by the fact that there are people who feel that Accra, being the capital, now belongs to all Ghanaians and not only the Ga. These people feel that the Ga should not impose their traditions on them. Below is a comment made when the subject came up for discussion on the Ghanaweb, a website dedicated to news and discussions about Ghana:

> The Ga city is now the seat of government of a people called GHANA. By subscribing to be part of the land called Ghana, the Ga automatically and logically lose the full RIGHT to FORCE and COERCE every resident in the Ga land to observe a tradition they have no VALUE for. They have to accommodate various views and beliefs of others. They are behaving like they own the entire Ga land. To force others who disagree with the tradition to observe it in a modern society and a civilized one like Ghana is very TROUBLING. [caps in original post]
>
> (http://sil.ghanaweb.com/r.php?id=1397862&thread=1396631)

There is no doubt that the expression of sentiments like these make the Ga feel that their dominion is being taken from them by strangers.

Another problem is that the linguistic component of cultural practices such as child-naming and marriage do not often remain Ga when one of the parents is non-Ga. I have a video recording of a marriage ceremony between a young Ga man and an Akan woman which took place in 2005 at Ashongman, one of the sprawl areas to the north. The whole ceremony was held in Akan and even the groom's father who was not very fluent in the language and was encouraged to speak Ga so that it would be translated refused and gave his speech in a heavily accented Akan. A sister of the groom tried to get the guests at the ceremony to join her in singing a Ga song for the couple but soon discovered that very few people could do so. She told them in Akan that it seemed that they didn't understand the words of her song, and then went on to translate it for them. The linguistic dynamics in this case are indicative of what transpires when the Ga come into contact with non-Ga. I now show that this is supported by my surveys.

While home and cultural events bring Ga together and, therefore, promote the language, social events bring them into contact with non-Ga. It is important in this case to determine not only what the Ga do but also what the non-Ga do. In my 2005 survey, all 21 respondents said that they spoke Akan at work. Sixteen of them also said they spoke

English. Only 5 of the 21 respondents also reported speaking Ga at work. This shows that while all the Ga interviewed spoke Akan at work, most of the non-Ga did not speak Ga at work. When asked what language they spoke most in the streets of Accra, 19 people mentioned Akan while two mentioned English. The answers given by the respondents are illuminating when seen from the perspective of their native language. The hospital technician who is a Ga male of 24 years said that he spoke Akan because "[Akan] is the most commonest (sic) way that people hear (sic) [i.e. understand] . . . so it is easier for others to really interpret it." The corn miller who is a 63-year-old Ga male responded thus:

> When I get to town I speak Akan or Ga because there are those who are Akans and I speak Akan with them . . . and then the Ga language. There are also those who when addressed in Ga say "as for me I don't understand" so I speak Akan with them.

In the 2007 survey, out of 40 respondents, 30 reported speaking Akan most in the streets of Accra while 15 reported speaking Ga and 18 English. Unlike my 2005 survey where I strongly encouraged respondents to mention the one language that they spoke most, in this case some respondents mentioned more than one language. When they were asked what language they would use to address a total stranger they met in the street, 29 chose Akan while 11 chose English. Significantly, none of them, including the 9 Ga, mentioned Ga. What this suggests is that the Ga are willing to adjust to the linguistic demands of the foreigners in their midst. Dakubu (1997) says that this is due to the fact that although the Ga are welcoming, they prefer to keep foreigners at an arm's length.

If the Ga are willing to accommodate the linguistic needs of non-Ga in their midst, the question is what about the latter? The Akans, it appears, do not see the need to learn the Ga language in order to communicate with them. In the 2005 survey, one person responded as follows: "For me, apart from Twi [i.e. Akan], I don't speak any other language. Unless someone asks me a question in English and requires a reply in English." Another said that "My Ga can only buy kenkey and fish . . . that's the most important Ga. . . . Fortunately, Akan is becoming dominant." Of course this does not mean that all Akans do not want to learn the Ga language. Two of the five Akans interviewed in 2005, one of whom was born in Accra, spoke Ga, while eight of the 15 Akans interviewed in the 2007 survey also said they speak Ga. Instead, what it shows is that the Akans feel confident enough in the predominance of their language within the city to declare openly that they do not need Ga.

Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that immigrants who are non-Akan also prefer to learn Akan rather than Ga. In one home I visited during the 2005 survey, a young man who belongs to the minority Nyagbo community said that when his wife moved to join him in Accra, he only spoke Akan to her for a long time until she had mastered it before he went back to using Nyagbo. His reason was that she needed Akan in order to get by in Accra. The family lived in a compound house beyond Achimota with families from different parts of the country, including Accra and northern Ghana, and they all use Akan to communicate with each other. The young man pointed out that this situation helped his wife to learn the language quickly. When a Ewe person was asked whether he spoke English when he went to the licensing office he replied:

> Yes, mostly, but sometimes you go and the people only speak Twi [Akan] to you so . . . when they speak Twi to me then I will respond . . . but when I start with English and then sometimes you see the person may even respond . . . you'd be surprised to . . . to get the response in Twi even though you asked in English.

Non-Akan immigrants therefore learn Akan in order to communicate with the people of Accra, including the Akans who don't learn any other language.

The business community in Accra has obviously found the advantages of using Akan to get to the wider population through the media. While print media is still in English only, billboards have begun to appear in the city advertising items in Akan. In July 2005 I drove through the whole city looking for billboards in Ghanaian languages, and could only find Akan ones, an example of which is included in Figure 8.2.

Figure 8.2 Billboard advertising Printex textiles in Akan

The only written messages one could find in other languages, including Ga, were warning notices to people not to urinate or defecate in certain places. These warning were also in English and Akan.

While the print media remain heavily English-influenced, Akan has begun to make inroads on the airwaves which also used to be mostly in English. For example, there are 17 FM stations in Accra and Tema and 4 TV channels. The FM stations and their main language of broadcast are given below:

- Joy FM (English)
- Atlantis (English)
- Peace FM (Akan)
- Radio Gold (English)
- City FM (English)
- Choice FM (English)
- Talk Radio (All)
- Obonu (Ga-Adangme)
- Vibe FM (English)
- Channel R (English)
- Radio Universe (English)
- Happy (Akan)
- Unique FM (English)
- Radio Hitz (English)
- BBC (English)
- VOA (English)
- Radio France International (RFI-French)

While at first glance it looks as though English dominates as the language of choice of the stations, what transpires in reality is different: many popular programs are in Akan or a combination of English and Akan. For instance, all the stations, with the exception of BBC, VOA, and RFI, have church services organized in the morning where people are invited to call in to ask for prayers. On Peace FM and Happy, these programs are in Akan, and on Obonu, it is in Ga. On the rest of the stations, it is supposed to be in English. However, the preachers invariably switch to Akan and most of those who call in make their requests in Akan. In addition, a number of the stations have Akan programs. For instance Radio Gold has a breakfast show where the newspaper review is done in English and Akan and call-ins are also in both languages. It also has a music-request program called *Afrakuma* that is predominantly in Akan.

While conducting the 2005 survey, I decided to travel around Accra in *trotros* which are the main transit system by which Ghanaians get about in the city, to find out which FM stations the drivers preferred, and the language in which they communicated with their passengers. The communication from Community 18, a suburb close to Tema, up to the 37 Military Hospital which is close to the center, was all in Akan and the radio tuned to Joy FM. I took five other *trotros* from the Military hospital to Nima, from Nima to Accra Central, from Accra Central to Chorkor (a Ga enclave on the west coast of the center) and back, and then from Accra Central to Teshie. On all these routes, the FM station was Peace FM, an Akan station. Only on the Hospital-Nima route did

the mate call out to passengers in Ga; in all the other places the language was Akan. I was particularly surprised on the drive to Chorkor. I used to take *trotro* buses plying this route in the 1980s and the language they used to ask people to move closer together in order to make room for other passengers was Ga. This time, even though the mate was Ga, as I later discovered, he called out to people in Akan, and his first language for addressing passengers was Akan. He did, however, reply to people who addressed him in Ga in the same language.

The situation with television stations is slightly different since they are not limited to the Accra area. However, with the exception of GTV which is the state TV channel and which covers the whole country, none of the other three which are private channels has a nationwide coverage. The main language of the channels is English. In addition, GTV broadcasts news and adult-education programs in five other languages namely, Akan Ga, Ewe, Dagbani, and Hausa. Lately, however, all the TV stations have begun to introduce a number of Akan programs which are supported by big businesses. For example of the programs given below which are aired on GTV, Western Union supports *Agorɔ* while Moneygram supports *Mmaa Nkɔmmɔ*.

1) Mma nkɔmmɔ ("women's conversation")
2) Agorɔ ("play")
3) Asɛm sɛ bɛ
4) Cantata
5) Susu birirbi
6) Mmarima ahyia ("men have met")
7) Kejetia

TV 3 also shows District Colonial Court, which is in a combination of Akan and English, and *Efie Wura*, which is purely Akan. The third station, Metro TV, shows *Nipa n'abrabɔ* (supported by Akosombo Textile Limited and Unique Trust), and Apostle Safo's show and *Nipa n'abrabɔ*, which are both purely Akan programs. Finally, TV Africa, a fairly recent addition to the stations also has *Oman yi mu nsɛm, nkoranhyɛ, mpaninsɛm*, and *woda a dwen*.

The final domain is that of education. Until recently, Ga was the only Ghanaian language taught in schools in Accra. However, nowadays Akan is also taught and, in some areas in the city including an area in Osu, one of the Ga townships, only Akan is taught.

In sum, while Ga is still used in Ga homes and during cultural practices, the situation is different when there are non-Ga indigenes involved, an increasingly common situation in the sprawl area. This has led to a situation where non-Ga people target Akan, rather than Ga, as the language of choice to acquire in Accra. Businesses have also followed this

trend and have begun to sponsor Akan language programs on radio and TV while lately, the state has also begun to offer it in schools in the city.

8.7 Language prestige

The element of prestige works in a different way: most Ghanaians seem to think that it is better to learn English than their ethnic language. A former Minister of Education in the present government for instance decided one day that English should be used as the language of instruction from the first year of primary school. While this policy has now been reversed, it serves as an illustration of the importance people place on English, often to the neglect of Ghanaian languages. As far as the local languages are concerned, the regional ones can be considered to be equally prestigious. The merest hint that one language might be more prestigious than another turns people against that language. As far as the regional languages go therefore, the decision to prioritize one is based on practical factors. At the individual level, people make decisions based on which language they think will benefit them most. In my 2005 sample survey, I asked the 21 people which languages they would want their children to learn. Then I asked them which one they would want the children to learn first. Of the 21 speakers 15 people, including two Ga, chose Akan. Only one speaker chose Ga as the first language. The remaining five chose English. Among the Akan people interviewed, only one person chose another language, which was English. One man who is married to a Guan chose Akan first, English second, and then added "and maybe their mother tongue." In the 2007 survey involving 40 people, 29 chose Akan, 9 chose Ga while 4 chose English. I do not see this as suggesting that the majority consider Akan to be more prestigious. Instead, these people are being practical in determining that their children needed Akan more than Ga to get by in the city.

While no regional language is considered to be more prestigious, there is no doubt that Akan traditions instill more pride in the Akan language than do the traditions of other ethnic groups for their languages. This is mainly attributable to the Asantes who constitute a subset of the Akan group. The Asante king speaks only Asante Twi (his dialect of Akan) to all people including dignitaries even though he is a well-educated man who can speak good English. In contrast, the kings of the other ethnic groups would rather show off their knowledge of English to visitors who do not speak their language. While this does not necessarily make ethnic languages endangered, it certainly does not promote them. Ga suffer from this problem just like all the other ethnic groups.

8.8 Conclusion

With a population of 600,000, it is clear that Ga is not going to disappear soon. However, as Landweer (2000) has pointed out, languages do not disappear because people disappear. The fact that the Ga use their language at home and their culture remains vibrant is an indication that the language is going to be around for some time yet. However, having become a minority in their homeland, and with the sprawl area continuing to increase, most immigrants are opting for Akan rather than Ga as the language to acquire in order to get by in the city. This is placing the Ga in a situation where they have to use Akan on a daily basis. For the time being, they acquire it as a second language. Yet as businesses and the state begin to promote Akan in the city, a shift to Akan in the future is not as inconceivable today as it might have been some decades ago.

Notes

1 This research was conducted as part of the Languages of Urban Africa project at the University of Florida. It was funded by the Office of Research and Graduate programs and the Center for African Studies.

2 The people are called Gã (although the orthography does not indicate the nasalization) and they call the city by the same name.

9 Multilingualism and language use in Porto Novo[1]

Wale Adeniran

9.1 Introduction

This chapter traces the sociohistorical origin of societal multilingualism in Porto Novo, the capital of the Republic of Bénin, and discusses the status of Egun, French, Yoruba, English (a second language of wider communication), six indigenous language varieties, and two immigrant Béninois languages (12 in all) in the city. Using raw data tabulation and percentages derived from questionnaires, induced self-reports on language behavior of a representative sample of the Porto Novian population, the study reports on the language ability of respondents as well as their linguistic behavior in some specific domains. The major finding of the study is that although two indigenous languages, Egun and Yoruba, are dominant in the informal domain of the home, and French in the formal domain of education, the picture is not yet quite clear in the formal domains of employment and religion, despite the institutional support and great prestige enjoyed by the French language in Porto Novo, and Bénin at large.

Porto Novo is the capital of the Republic of Bénin (formerly Dahomey), a small francophone West African country with a population of about six million, which borders Nigeria to the east, Togo to the west, and Burkina Faso and Niger to the north. Porto Novo is of great historical importance in western Yorubaland.

In pre-colonial times, Porto Novo was the major trading port of the Oyo Empire and it played a prominent role in the slave trade (Smith 1978: 106–7). It was also an important agricultural town that fed Badagry and Lagos, among other towns, with agricultural produce, especially palm oil. Today, given the mixture of its population and the consequent presence of several languages in the city, Porto Novo can be said to be a microcosm of the country, Bénin, and it is without doubt, representative of many African cities.

9.1.1 The inhabitants of Porto Novo

Porto Novo was founded toward the end of the seventeenth century by Yoruba migrants from the east. Shortly thereafter, they were joined by Aja migrants from Allada in the west (Aguah-Hode et al. 2004: 3), who are now referred to as Gun (Egun) people of Porto Novo. There are other Aja-related minority groups that are considered indigenous to Porto Novo. From inception, the Yoruba have always called the town Ajase while the Egun call it Hogbonu (Parrinder 1955: 29–34). It was named Porto Novo in 1752 by Portuguese slave traders (Aguah-Hode et al. 2004: 3).

The two major ethnolinguistic groups that are indigenous to Porto Novo are the Egun (Gun) and the Yoruba who, together, make up about 70 percent of the population of the city. The smaller ethnolinguistic groups of Weme, Seto, Tori, Xwala, Defi, and Tofin make up about 17 percent of the population (Huannou et al. 2001: 4). Upon the abolition of the Atlantic slave trade, many freed slaves returned to Porto Novo from Brazil. These Afro-Brazilians are commonly known as Aguda and their descendants make up about 1 percent of the city's population (Feugère 1987: 3). Although they do not have a language of their own, the Afro-Brazilians have strongly influenced the architecture of religious, public, and private buildings in Porto Novo, and they came with new skills, ways of dressing and foods (Aguah-Hode et al. 2004: 4). There is also a noticeable presence of recent immigrants who are speakers of Fon and Mina who together make up about 12 percent of the population of Porto Novo. In 2000, the population of Porto Novo was estimated at about 215,000, with an annual growth rate of 2.3 percent. The population is relatively young, with those under 15 years making up more than 50 percent of the population of the city, while women account for 51.37 percent (Feugère 1987: 3).

Residence within the city is mixed as no quarter or part of it is reserved for any particular ethnic group. There is frequent and constant interaction among the inhabitants. As remarked by Parrinder (1955: 30), "most of the inhabitants of the town are bilingual, speaking Gun and Yoruba, and there is easy intermarriage" between members of the two ethnolinguistic groups.

9.2 Socio-historical background of societal multilingualism in Porto Novo

Fasold (1984: 9–12) identifies four patterns that account for the existence of societal multilingualism. These are (i) migration, (ii) imperialism, (iii) federation, and (iv) border area multilingualism; and these are

not mutually exclusive. The specific case of Porto Novo seems to bear this out, as the four patterns could be said to apply to the city. For instance, it would seem that the *migration* from Allada mentioned above, which took place in the early eighteenth century, marked the genesis of societal multilingualism in Porto Novo. Té-Agbanlin and his group of migrants came with their own language and settled among the original inhabitants, the host ethnic group, who were Yoruba-speaking. It would appear that each group has since maintained their nationality without one group being assimilated linguistically or culturally to the other.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, *imperialism* in the form of French colonization added the French language to the community's repertoire. Consequently, a community that was hitherto characterized by endoglossic bilingualism now began to feature exoglossic bilingualism in its repertoire. It can be assumed that the number of French nationals who migrated to Porto Novo as colonialists at the end of the nineteenth century must have been fewer than the Aja elements who came from Allada and settled in Porto Novo a century earlier. The significant difference is that the French colonialists forcefully imposed their language in all spheres of life and sought to stamp out the indigenous languages. Even after independence, obtained in 1960, French imperialism is still present in Porto Novo as well as the rest of Bénin in the form of economic imperialism for which *la francophonie* serves as the main vehicle (Agboton 1997: 171–7).

The third historical pattern which contributes to multilingualism, and which is present in Porto Novo, is *federation,* that is, "the union of diverse ethnic groups or nationalities under the political control of one state" (Fasold 1984: 11). This is a consequence of European colonization which brought various nationalities together. Porto Novo, as the capital and, with the largest concentration of educational institutions in the country, has had to play host to speakers of languages such as Fon, Mina, and others. In light of the above, one can therefore describe Porto Novo as a mixed or composite speech community consisting of complex and overlapping communities. Contrary to Fasold's (1984: 11) postulation that forced federations tend to induce stresses, however, members of the various ethnolinguistic groups in Porto Novo have been able to coexist in relative peace and harmony. The only time there has been any serious social unrest was between 1893 and 1923 as a result of succession disputes to the royal throne of Porto Novo. Also, during this period, a power tussle among Muslims of the city, which resulted in the French taking sides with one of the parties, led to social upheaval. The greatest disturbance was occasioned by agitation against taxes which pitched French authorities against Yoruba Muslim leaders and led to the 1923 riots (Ballard 1965: 52–75). The relative peace and

harmony that have since characterized life in Porto Novo have earned the city the sobriquet "Porto Novo, La Tolérante" (Porto Novo the city of tolerance). This is all the more so since Porto Novo harbors practitioners of African traditional religions, Muslims, and Catholic and Protestant Christians, without friction or hostility (Feugère 1987: 102).

A fourth factor identified by Fasold as being responsible for societal multilingualism is location in a *border* area. The Nigeria-Bénin border was arbitrarily established thereby splitting the Egun and Yoruba ethnolinguistic groups, among others, between the two states with two distinct official languages of English in Nigeria and French in Bénin (Asiwaju 1984: 12). Under French colonial rule, "flight to Nigeria to avoid taxes, military service and forced labour was perennial" (Ballard 1965: 70). The fact is generally recognized that Nigeria's border with Bénin is among the busiest and the most porous (Afolayan 2000: 13). Porto Novo is 43 kilometres or less than 30 minutes drive from the border, and this qualifies it to be referred to as lying within the socioeconomic space generated by the Nigeria-Benin border.

A combination of the facts highlighted above is likely to make Porto Novians evolve "attitudes and characteristics suggesting a preference for some measure of binationality or dual citizenship" (Asiwaju 1984: 12) with the necessary linguistic consequences which are bound to promote societal multilingualism. For example, as observed during the field work for this study, Nigerian home video films in Yoruba with English subtitles have become popular in Porto Novo.

Given the presence in the Porto Novian urban space of two dominant indigenous languages, Egun and Yoruba, an official (ex-colonial) language, French, six minority indigenous languages, Seto, Tori, Tofin, Defi, Xwala, and Weme, two indigenous immigrant languages, Fon and Mina, as well as English, a second European language of wider communication (SELWC) which can also be considered an immigrant language, two questions are addressed below: (1) Which languages are most commonly used by Porto Novians?; (2) Which language(s) do speakers habitually use in specific domains? Answers to these questions are bound to be tied to the status of the languages in contact in Porto Novo.

9.3 Status of languages in Porto Novo

For the purpose of this study, a language is considered "dominant" if it has more prestige in the community than others, or is favored by government, or it has a relatively large number of speakers. A language is considered a "minority" language if the numerical strength of its speakers is weak or it lacks governmental (institutional) support and it commands low prestige in the community (Richards et al. 1985: 156).

On the basis of the above definition, Egun, Yoruba, and French qualify to be referred to as the dominant or major languages in Porto Novo while Seto, Tofin, Defi, Xwala, Weme, Tori, Fon, and Mina are referred to as minority languages. English can also be considered a dominant language in Porto Novo since it enjoys institutional support in Benin and plays a considerable role in the socioeconomic life of the country. The status of each of the dominant and the minority languages is discussed below with a view to highlighting the relative strength of each in the Porto Novian society.

9.3.1 Dominant languages

Although Egun, Yoruba, French, and English are referred to as dominant languages in Porto Novo, they are by no means of equal status. This inequality will be highlighted in the discussion that follows.

9.3.1.1 Egun

According to Yai (1976: 64), Gun (Egun) belongs to Fon-Aja group of the Niger-Congo family identified by Joseph Greenberg (1966). The group includes Fon, Mina, Aja, Seto, Tori, Aizo, Watchi, Kotafon, Pla, Pede, and so on. Adediran (1994: 5) also speaks of the Fon, Mahi, and Egun sub-groups of the Aja. The Yoruba in general refer to all these subgroups collectively as Egun or Fon but recognize that there are differences among them and therefore they refer to Egun-Mahi, Egun-Abomey (Fon), Egun-Popo, and Egun-Ajase (Porto Novo). Demographically, Egun is the most dominant language in Porto Novo since its speakers comprise close to 37 percent of the total population of the city. In Bénin, however, it is one of the minority languages since it has only about 320,000 speakers nationwide.

Although the bible was translated into Egun in 1923, there is no standard Egun, and the literacy rate in it is estimated by Ethnologue at between one and five percent. It is neither used as medium of education nor studied as a subject at school. It therefore lacks any substantial body of written literature. Speakers of Egun now mix Egun and Yoruba, Egun and Fon, and the Yoruba greeting system has been substituted for the Egun system.

9.3.1.2 Yoruba

The Yoruba language is spoken by about 32 percent of the city's population. It has 16 dialectal varieties in Bénin and it is one of the three dominant indigenous languages, along with Aja and Fon, in the

southern part of the country. The Porto Novo variety of Yoruba "is practically the same language as Standard Nigerian Yoruba" (Yai 1976: 67), and the standard Bénin variety is based on it. It seems to enjoy a higher status than Egun since the speakers of Yoruba dominate the economic life of the city, and it is studied, along with Aja and Fon, at the University. The Yoruba language had been seriously studied and worked upon in neighboring Nigeria by missionaries in the first half of the nineteenth century (Ade Ajayi 1960: 49–58). Without doubt, the standardization of Yoruba in Nigeria must have impacted positively on its status in Bénin since, according to Yai (1976: 74), a bilingual (Yoruba-French) newspaper *Iwe Ajase* was published in the 1930s. He informs further that the fact of the Yoruba language being used for adult literacy in Porto Novo and elsewhere in Bénin accounts for the popularity of Yoruba newspapers, magazines, and comics from Nigeria among literate Yoruba in Porto Novo and Cotonou. Yoruba is one of the six Béninois languages that the authorities have stipulated should be used by various government ministries in interacting with local populations in towns and villages. It was also one of the six adopted as working languages of the Revolutionary National Assembly from 1983 to 1990 by Kerekou's Marxist-Leninist regime (Igué 1998: 26).

9.3.1.3 English

English as an immigrant second European language of wider communication in Porto Novo deserves special mention. The language has always been taught as a foreign language along with German, Spanish, and Portuguese in the Béninois school system. Unlike the others, however, English is a compulsory subject for Béninois secondary school students. The attention given to English by the Béninois authorities has to do with its perceived role as an important tool of communication both at the regional level and in the world at large. This is further reinforced by the fact that it is the official language of its neighbor, the big and powerful regional player, Nigeria, as well as that of Ghana, both countries with which Bénin maintains strong and friendly relations.

Presently, according to Igué (2002: 42), the Igbo of Nigeria make up one-fifth (20 percent) of the population of Bénin. Afolayan (2000: 48) reports that the Igbo from the eastern part of Nigeria are becoming prominent in trans-border trade in the Nigeria-Bénin border area where they are said to have settled down in appreciable numbers since the end of the Nigerian civil war in 1970. In Cotonou, Bénin's commercial capital, they dominate the trade in second-hand clothes, and their presence is strongly felt in Porto Novo too. Igbo presence in Bénin

has further enhanced the status of the English language since they have established English-medium schools for the education of their children. Furthermore, English has become one of the examination subjects for entrance into most secondary schools in the country (Igué 2002: 38).

The two Béninois television stations which are located in Cotonou transmit English programs. For example, one of the stations broadcasts news in English, and the other runs a serial drama, *Crossroads Café*, six days of the week to help listeners improve their competence and proficiency in English. Most Béninois students consider English an indispensable asset in the labor market and see it as important for economic relations with Nigeria.[2]

9.3.1.4 French

By virtue of the 1889 Anglo-French Agreement, Western Yorubaland was split almost equally between the British and the French. The French Law of Separation of 1904, legally severing the connection between Church and State, had ensured the secularization of education in all French territories. The French colonial administration owned schools directly, prevented the establishment of Christian mission schools, and the few that existed were obliged to take government grants and submit to official directives in all matters relating to the curriculum. According to Asiwaju (2001: 226–7), "French was the unrivalled language of instruction from the . . . primary school to the university. . ., the French completely rejected the *mother tongue* in their educational system."

Consequently, as pointed out by Igué (2002: 25) French and Béninois languages can be said to be in a diglossic relationship with clearly defined functions. French is the official language of administration, of education at all levels, indispensable for social promotion, and it is accorded great prestige by both the educated and the uneducated masses of the country. According to Igué (1998), the Béninois languages, including Egun and Yoruba, tend to be restricted to the home, informal social relations, and cultural activities.

However, Midiohouan (2002: 137ff) believes that although Béninois languages have not been introduced into formal education, they are beginning to erode the functions of the official language, French; that is, they have started leaking into some of the formal domains controlled by the official language. He believes, also, that, the deep-rooted affection of the Béninois masses for their languages is eroding the prestige of the French language as these languages have greater meaning and relevance to their daily life.

9.3.2 Minority languages of Porto Novo

The minority languages of Porto Novo comprise both indigenous Béninois languages and those brought by immigrants.

9.3.2.1 Indigenous minority languages

The indigenous minority languages of Porto Novo are Weme, Seto, Defi, Tori, Tofin, and Xwala, each of which is spoken by fewer than 5 percent of the population of the city. Given the relatively high degree of mutual intelligibility between these varieties and Egun, one may safely conclude that they are perhaps dialects of the same language.

Speakers of Defi and Xwala are scattered all over the city. It is reported that the Seto and the Tori speak Egun to conceal their identity once they step out of their homes or neighborhoods.[3] Tofin and Tori have a high degree of intercomprehension with the difference being noticeable only at the level of accent. Also, there is some degree of intercomprehension between Seto, Xwala, and Tori. All these minority varieties have, just as Egun, substituted their salutation systems with Yoruba greeting systems. At the cultural level, speakers of these varieties have taken over *egungun* and *oro* festivals which the Yoruba have given up because of their Islamic faith.

9.3.2.2 Immigrant languages

Although Fon and Mina are minority immigrant languages in Porto Novo, they are major languages in their native areas. For instance, Fon is native to Abomey, Ouidah, and surrounding areas in southern Bénin. Mina is spoken in Cotonou, the commercial and de facto capital of Bénin. With the above discussion as background, we are likely to have a better understanding of the language choice patterns of respondents in this study. We shall now discuss the methodology adopted for the study.

9.4 The study

Given the society-centered nature of our study, which is comprehensive and general rather than meticulous and microscopic, we have adopted a predominantly sociological approach. Our choice of such an approach is informed by the fact that we are interested in investigating the functional distribution of Egun, French, and Yoruba in specific domains (Fishman 1964; 1965; 1968).

9.4.1 Methodology

The methodology adopted for this study is elicitation of information, that is, self-report on language behavior, through a multidimensional interview schedule.[4] We consider this methodology best suited for our study since it enables us to handle a sizeable but purely random sample of the population universe of Porto Novo. The data collected were supplemented with participant observation so as to aid a better understanding of the language choice patterns of our respondents.[5]

To qualify to be a respondent, a subject needed to be a member of one of the ethnolinguistic groups indigenous to Porto Novo or needed to have been resident in the city for not less than 10 years. Using these criteria, we were able to interview 511 subjects. We are inclined to believe that this sample could be said to be representative of the different social and ethnolinguistic groups in Porto Novo (See Table 9.1).

The stratified random sampling technique was employed in the administration of the questionnaire/interview schedule. Five field assistants, two male and two female undergraduates and a postgraduate student of the Université d'Abomey-Calavi, who were very familiar with the city of Porto Novo, were recruited and trained in the administration of the interview schedule. The interviews were conducted in homes, on busy streets, and in neighborhoods in various parts of the city. The respondents completed the interview schedule with the assistance of our field workers. There were cases where respondents opted to respond to the schedule on their own; in such cases, we were asked to come back later to pick up the completed schedule.

9.4.2 Demographic information

The variable considered most crucial for an understanding of multilingualism in Porto Novo is ethnicity. All the languages present in the city, with the exception of English and French, are ethnically encumbered. In order to have a clearer picture of our sample, however, we decided to correlate respondents' ethnic origin with their self-report on language use. We therefore describe our sample and their language behavior in specific domains in terms of their ethnicity while providing some information on respondents' marital status and religious affiliation given the high rate of intermarriage in Porto Novo and the fact that this and religious affiliation in the city seem to influence language choice in some domains (Adeniran 2004).

9.4.2.1 Ethnic origin

Although Porto Novo is popularly known to be home to the Egun and Yoruba as well as some relatively smaller ethnolinguistic groups, there are also speakers of Fon and Mina. For the purposes of our classification and analysis, speakers of all other languages apart from Egun and Yoruba are grouped together as "others." Egun respondents comprise 39.4 percent of our total sample while the Yoruba account for 33.1 percent. The 505 respondents who indicated their ethnic origin are grouped as shown in Table 9.1, where the percentages are also representative of the composition of the population of Porto Novo as a whole.

9.4.2.2 Marital status and ethnicity of spouse

Five hundred and one respondents indicated their marital status and they are grouped into four categories as follows: *bachelor/spinster*, *married*, *separated/divorced, and widowed.* Table 9.2 summarizes respondents' marital status. Those who are (or had once) married number 211 (41.3 percent) of our total sample.

It is remarkable that out of 211 marriages reported by our respondents 209 (99.06 percent) are mixed. Without doubt, mixed marriages

Table 9.1 Distribution of respondents by ethnic origin

Ethnic origin	Number	%
Egun	199	39.4
Yoruba	167	33.1
Others	139	27.5
Total	505	100.0

Table 9.2 Distribution of respondents by marital status and ethnic origin

	Total		Egun		Yoruba		Others	
Status	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Bachelor/spinster	292	58.3	114	39.0	94	32.2	84	28.7
Married	195	38.1	78	40.7	64	33.3	50	26.0
Separated/divorced	11	2.1	4	36.3	5	45.4	2	18.18
Widowed	5	0.9	2	33.3	2	33.3	2	33.3
Total	501	100						

are the norm in Porto Novo, and it is expected that this will result in widespread societal bilingualism. Of the 209 mixed marriages, speakers of Egun and Yoruba account for 142 (67.2 percent). Table 9.3 shows the proportion of Egun respondents with Yoruba spouses as well as Yoruba respondents with Egun spouses.

9.4.2.3 Religion

Religion is a demographic variable of considerable interest in Porto Novo given its salience for language choice in the city (Adeniran 2004: 441–2). Among the 496 of our respondents who indicated their faith, Christians are in the majority, followed by Muslims, while adherents of African traditional religions (ATR) comprise an insignificant proportion of the sample. Table 9.4 summarizes the distribution of respondents by religion.

Table 9.4 shows that out of 281 Christian respondents, Egun speakers account for 169 (60.5 percent), and the Yoruba number only 12 (4.5 percent). On the other hand, out of 188 Moslems, Yoruba respondents number 151 (80.5 percent) and the Egun account for 15 (8.0 percent).

Table 9.3 Profile of interethnic marriages

Spouses' ethnic origin	Total		Egun Spouse		Yoruba Spouse	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Egun married men	50	38.2	45	90.0	5	10.0
Yoruba married men	42	32.1	13	31.0	29	69.0
Egun married women	28	45.9	4	14.2	24	85.7
Yoruba married women	22	31.6	6	27.2	16	72.7

Table 9.4 Distribution of respondents by religion by ethnic group

Religion	No.	%	Egun		Yoruba		Others	
			No	%	No.	%	No.	%
Christianity	281	56.6	169	60.1	12	4.3	100	35.6
Islam	188	37.9	15	7.9	151	80.3	22	11.7
ATR	27	5.9	12	44.4	3	11.2	12	44.4
Total		100						

9.4.3 Analysis of findings: a profile of Porto Novo

To determine the degree of individual bilingualism as a reflection of the extent of societal multilingualism, we sought to know which languages our respondents speak. The question was asked in French as follows:

> *Lesquelles de ces langues parlez-vous?*
> Which ones of these languages do you speak?

We suggested four possible answers:

Yoruba	*Goun*	*Français*	*Autre (à préciser)*
Yoruba	Gun	French	Other (specify)

Out of 511 respondents, 248 (48.5 percent) claimed they speak Egun and Yoruba; 228 (44.6 percent) claimed to be able to speak French and Yoruba; 314 (61.4 percent) claimed to be able to speak the three languages. Those who claimed to be monolingual in Egun numbered 51 (9.9 percent); Yoruba monolinguals numbered 41 (8.8 percent); and French monolinguals out of the sample numbered 30 (5.8 percent). The responses by frequency and percentage are shown in Table 9.5. From the data in Table 9.5 it is obvious that in Porto Novo, bilingualism is the norm and that the city is characterized by a relatively high degree of societal multilingualism.

We also sought to find out the first language acquired by respondents at childhood. Out of our sample, 232 respondents (45.2 percent) claimed Egun as first language acquired, 149 (29.0 percent) claimed Yoruba while 24 (4.7 percent) claimed French. With respect to the minority languages, 17 respondents (3.3 percent) claimed Weme as the first language acquired, 14 (2.7 percent) claimed Tori, and 2 (0.4 percent) claimed Seto while no one claimed to have acquired either Defi, Tofin, or Xwala as a first language.

Table 9.5 Frequency distribution of respondents by languages spoken

Languages spoken	No. of speakers	%
Egun and Yoruba	248	48.5
Egun and French	314	61.4
Yoruba and French	228	44.6
Three Languages	209	40.9
Egun only	51	9.9
Yoruba only	41	8.0
French only	30	5.8

In addition, we sought to investigate the ability of respondents to speak each of the languages in the city. Four hundred and four respondents (78.8 percent) claimed ability to speak Egun, 308 (60.0 percent) claimed ability to speak Yoruba, and 365 (71.2 percent) claimed to be able to speak French. Our findings in respect of the minority languages reveal that 31 respondents (6.0 percent) claimed ability to speak Weme, 27 (5.3 percent) claimed to be able to speak Tori, and 6 (1.2 percent) claimed Seto. Again no one claimed to be able to speak Defi, Tofin, or Xwla.

As stated earlier, the dominant languages in the Porto Novian urban space are French, Egun, and Yoruba. The most notable observation that could be made is that individual bilingualism appears to be the norm in the city with the French language appearing to be the most dominant as a second language. Although it was acquired in childhood by only 4.7 percent of our respondents, 71.2 percent claim ability to speak it. It may be premature, at this stage, to suggest that the minority languages are dying out in Porto Novo.

With regard to minority languages, since there is said to be a high degree of intercomprehension between Tori and Tofin, respondents who claim ability to speak Tori might have found it unnecessary or superfluous to also name Tofin since they might not consider one as being different from the other. The same argument might apply to Xwala which is said to be mutually intelligible with Seto and Tori. The problem that this situation raises, however, has to do with the definition of language and dialect, especially in the Francophone sphere where, for a long time, only French was considered worthy of being called a language (Marcellesi 1979: 64) while all other language varieties are looked down upon as nothing but *patois* and *idiomes locaux* (Bokamba 1984: 10).

In respect of the immigrant languages in Porto Novo, 42 (8.1 percent) of our respondents and 16 (3.1 percent), respectively claimed childhood acquisition of Fon and Mina. It is remarkable, however, that 117 (22.8 percent) claim ability to speak Fon while 52 (10.1 percent) claim to be able to speak Mina. The relatively strong showing of Fon in Porto Novo is attributable to the fact of its being one of the two languages (along with Yoruba) which "seem to have a lead on other languages in the south" and "on account of the large number of its users who work in the civil service and business" (Yai 1976: 64–5).

Another immigrant language of note in Porto Novo is English. Out of 511 respondents, 54 (10.5 percent) claim ability to speak the language. Due to its presence in the Béninois education system as reported in 4.0 above, 27 respondents (5.3 percent) claim it as one of the languages they use at school and 29 (5.7 percent) state that they use it at their place of work. Also, 59 respondents (11.5 percent) claim they understand but

cannot speak English, 115 (22.4 percent) claim they can read in the language while 108 (21 percent) claim they can write it. Nonetheless, Fon, Mina, and English, cannot be said to be a threat to any of the other three dominant languages in the city, for now.

Therefore, in order to have a clearer picture of the relative strength of each of the dominant languages, we decided to examine their use in some specific domains with a view to determining the extent of domain separation or overlap among them.

9.4.4 Language use in selected domains

Fishman's (1968) proposition of domains as institutional contexts in which a particular language is likely to be more appropriate and dominant is generally assumed to obtain in the Porto Novo speech community. It is believed that there is a functional distribution of the languages to the extent that the French language holds a privileged position in education and administration and is seen as indispensable for social promotion, while the Béninois languages are said to be very much alive at the grass-roots level as languages of hearth, home, and cultural activities (Igué 1998; Yai 1976), although this view has been contested by Midiohouan as indicated above.

We have therefore selected four domains for an investigation of habitual language usage. Two of these domains, that is, the home and place of worship have been described by Fishman (1989) as ethnically encumbered, and the two others, the school and worksphere as ethnically unencumbered. In Porto Novo, however, while one may speak of the home as being ethnically encumbered, the same may not be true of the place of worship in respect of our Egun respondents as will be shown below.

9.4.4.1 Home

In seeking to find out from our respondents which language is dominant at home, the question asked was:

> *Quelle langue parlez-vous normalement chez vous?*
> Which language do you normally speak at home?

In response to the above question, 223 respondents, that is 43.6 percent of our total sample, claim that they normally speak Egun at home, 176 (34.3 percent) claim that they use Yoruba, while 76 (14.8 percent) claim that they use French. However, it is remarkable that not all native speakers of Yoruba and Egun claim habitual usage of their mother tongue in the home domain. For example, out of 199 Egun respondents,

Table 9.6 Frequency distribution of language use in the home domain by ethnic origin

Language spoken	Yoruba		Egun		Others		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yoruba	143	81.7	21	12.0	11	6.3	175	100
Egun	23	10.3	163	73.1	37	16.5	223	100
French	18	23.6	31	40.9	27	33.8	76	100

163 (81.9 percent) claim they habitually use Egun at home. Out of 168 Yoruba respondents, 143 (85.1 percent) habitually use the mother tongue at home. There are, however, 60 respondents who are members of other ethnolinguistic groups who habitually use Egun at home while 33 non-Yoruba respondents claim habitual use of Yoruba at home.

Of the 76 respondents who claim frequent use of the French language in the home domain, members of the Yoruba ethnolinguistic group account for 18 (23.6 percent), and Egun native speakers account for 31 (40.9 percent) while members of the other ethnolinguistic groups account for 27 (35.5 percent). Table 9.6 summarizes language use in the home domain by ethnic origin. It is noteworthy also that 23 (4.5 percent) of our 511 respondents claim frequent Egun/Yoruba bilingual usage at home, 30 (5.8 percent) claim Egun/French bilingual usage and 18 (3.5 percent) indicate the use of French and Yoruba.

9.4.4.2 School

In Porto Novo, the school is an ideologically encumbered domain. According to Bokamba (1984: 6–7), in the former French colonies, "education for the colonized people was not an end in itself, but rather a means through which acculturation and servitude were to be achieved." And even after independence, the school continues to be "an agent of the spread of French and its culture." One hundred and forty nine of our respondents are still at school; 85 (57.0 percent) are Egun and 64 (42.9 percent) are Yoruba. In seeking to find out what language(s) respondents claim to use at school, we decided to investigate language use in the classroom and on the playground. Out of 85 Egun respondents, 6 (7.0 percent) claim they make use of Egun in the classroom as against 1 (1.8 percent) who uses Yoruba and 83 (97.6 percent) who claim they use French. Of 64 Yoruba respondents, 1 (1.5 percent) claim the use of Yoruba in the classroom, none claims the use of Egun while

63 (98.4 percent) claim the use of French. Without doubt, the dominant language in the classroom in Porto Novo remains the French language with a relatively insignificant presence of the mother tongue.

However, since the school playground is part of the school domain, we decided to investigate the language use of our student respondents in this locale. Since they would be freer in this environment than in the formal classroom setting, which can be considered normatively inappropriate for the mother tongue, it was felt that findings from the playground might approximate more closely to respondents' habitual language use and choice.

Results obtained show that 38 (44.7 percent) of our Egun respondents claim they use Egun on the playground, 8 (9.4 percent) of them claim they use Yoruba while 67 (78.5 percent) claim the use of French. Out of 64 Yoruba respondents, 30 (46.8 percent) claim they use Yoruba, 21 (32.8 percent) claim Egun and 58 (90.6 percent) claim they use French. Bilingual usage of Egun/Yoruba, Egun/French, and Yoruba/French ranges from 1.8 percent to as high as 42.1 percent. Tables 9.7 and 9.8 below summarize language use in the classroom and on the playground by Egun and Yoruba students. While the French language can be said to maintain a firm grip on the classroom, it appears it is being gradually displaced from the playground by Egun and Yoruba.

Table 9.7 Language use at school by Egun students

Scale	Egun		Yoruba		French		Egun/ Yoruba		Egun/ Yoruba		Yoruba/ French	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Classroom	6	7.0	1	1.8	83	97.6	1	1.8	4	4.7	1	1.8
Playground	38	44.7	8	9.4	67	78.8	6	7.0	24	28.2	8	9.4

Table 9.8 Language use at school by Yoruba students

Locale	Yoruba		Egun		French		Yoruba/ Egun		Yoruba/ French		Egun/ French	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Classroom	1	1.6	–	–	63	98.4	–	–	1	1.6	–	–
Playground	30	46.8	21	32.8	58	90.6	15	23.4	27	42.1	19	29.7

9.4.4.3 Language use at places of worship

As mentioned above (see Table 9.4), the religious faiths of our respondents are African Traditional Religion (ATR), Islam, and Christianity. We sought to know the dominant language used by respondents at their place of worship. We found that out of 153 Yoruba respondents who indicated their faith, 138 (90.1 percent) claim they habitually use the Yoruba language at their place of worship, while 14 (8.4 percent) indicate Egun and 28 (16.9 percent) claim they use French. Out of 183 Egun respondents, 123 (67.2 percent) claim to use Egun, 14 (7.6 percent) claim they use Yoruba and 115 (62.8 percent) claim French. Clearly, the Yoruba language is dominant among our Yoruba respondents who are predominantly Muslims while Egun and French are almost at par among the Egun speakers. Table 9.9 below summarizes our findings for the religious sphere.

9.4.4.4 Language use in the workplace

Of the 330 respondents who are in one type of employment or the other, 240 (77.1 percent) are artisans and petty traders, 64 (20.5 percent) are in the professions and the civil service. From the ethnic perspective, 138 (41.8 percent) are Egun and 112 (33.9 percent) are Yoruba. Ninety-two (66.7 percent) of Egun native speakers claim they use Egun at work,

Table 9.9 Language use at place of worship by ethnic group

Language spoken	Yoruba		Egun		Others		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yoruba	138	90.1	14	7.6	14	8.5	165	100.0
Egun	14	9.1	123	67.2	46	25.1	183	100.0
French	28	18.3	115	62.8	73	33.8	330	100.0

Table 9.10 Language use at work by ethnic origin

Language spoken	Yoruba		Egun		Others		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Yoruba	70	62.5	28	20.2	15	18.7	113	100.0
Egun	50	44.6	92	66.7	41	51.2	183	100.0
French	111	99.1	122	88.4	80	100.0	330	100.0

28 of them (20.3 percent) claim they use Yoruba and 122 (88.4 percent) use French. Among the Yoruba respondents, 70 (62.5 percent) claim they use Yoruba, 50 (45.0 percent) claim Egun and 111 (99.1 percent) claim they use French. These findings are summarized in Table 9.10.

9.4.5 Ethnicity and language use

In the ethnically encumbered domain of the home analyzed above, it appears that Egun and Yoruba are fairly secure against encroachment from the official language, French, in spite of the disparities in power between the latter and the two major indigenous languages of the city. In this domain, Egun and Yoruba which are acquired at home as mother tongues are dominant in the home, a normatively appropriate context for the mother tongue. There is a greater presence of French in the Egun home than in the Yoruba home. This may be due to the fact that Egun native speakers embraced Western education and Christianity earlier and in greater numbers and more willingly than the Yoruba native speakers of Porto Novo did.

Although French is not a mother tongue in the city, 24 respondents (4.7 percent) claim it was the first language they acquired in childhood. On the other hand, 232 respondents (45.2 percent) claim Egun as their first language while 149 (29.0 percent) claim to have acquired Yoruba as first language. Undoubtedly, French is the intrusive language in Porto Novo. In spite of its forceful imposition, it does not appear to be able to displace Egun and Yoruba from the home and place of worship. Therefore, when the 511 respondents are looked at globally in terms of language use at home, 225 (44.0 percent) claim habitual Egun usage, 176 (34.4 percent) claim Yoruba usage while only 75 (14.6 percent) claim French. Thirty respondents (5.8 percent) report Egun/French bilingual usage as against 23 (4.5 percent) Yoruba/Egun and 18 (3.5 percent) Yoruba/French bilingual usage.

In the religious sphere, which can be said to be ideologically encumbered among our Egun respondents, the mother tongue dominates with 67.2 percent, followed by French with 25.1 percent and Yoruba 7.7 percent. As for Yoruba respondents, the mother tongue is decidedly dominant with 90.1 percent, while the French language accounts for 16.9 percent and Egun 8.5 percent. For our Yoruba respondents, the religious sphere may be considered both ethnically and ideologically encumbered. When looked at globally, French appears dominant in the religious sphere with 218 respondents (42.7 percent) claiming its usage in this domain as against 185 (36.2 percent) for Egun and 167 (32.7 percent) for Yoruba. The apparent overall dominance of French in the religious sphere can be attributed to the fact that, just as for most Egun

native speakers, the vast majority of speakers of the minority languages in Porto Novo are of the Christian faith. While the bible has been translated into Egun, there are no translations of the book into any of the minority languages of the city. And considering the fact that Christianity was introduced into the city by French missionaries, the church can be considered a normatively appropriate context for French usage. This is all the more so since the current wave of Pentecostalism (a postcolonial phenomenon) makes use of French more than any of the indigenous languages.

Among our Yoruba respondents, however, an overwhelming majority (90.1 percent) claim mother tongue usage in their place of worship. This is due to the fact that in Porto Novo the Yoruba language is strongly associated with Islam (Adeniran 2004). Therefore, while the phenomenon of relinguification can be suspected to be in process among the speakers of minority languages, and to some extent, among Egun native speakers, the same cannot be said to be true of Yoruba respondents.

Since the school is a French import into the city of Porto Novo, it is not surprising that the French language enjoys overwhelming dominance. The zero-tolerance level of the French colonial authorities for African languages, especially in education and administration, explains the dominance of French in the school. The school can, therefore, be considered an ideologically encumbered domain in favor of the French language and culture. Nonetheless, the two major indigenous languages may have started to encroach on the school domain via the playground.[6]

In the work domain, despite the fact that French is dominant with virtually all Yoruba respondents and a majority of Egun speakers claiming the use of French in this domain, the two major indigenous languages of Porto Novo also have a strong presence in the work domain. This is one domain that cannot be considered the exclusive preserve of any language. Again the apparent dominance of French in the work domain may be due partly to the fact that it is the language that is likely to be used most often by speakers of minority and immigrant languages of the city at their place of work.[7] It is also worthy of note that while the French language is absent in the religious life of Yoruba respondents, it registers almost 100 percent presence in their work life. This may be due to the fact that since the Yoruba control the commercial life of the city, they would consider it advantageous to be able to operate in French so as to aid their business.

9.5 Conclusion

In the informal domain of the home, Egun and Yoruba are dominant with French making only a slightly significant appearance there. In the

formal domain of the school, French is dominant although the indigenous languages are not altogether absent. The picture is not quite as clear in the formal domains of the workplace and religion. The Yoruba language maintains an unquestionable dominance in the religious sphere to the exclusion of French and Egun given its strong association with Islam, for which Yoruba can be considered a lingua franca in Porto Novo. Egun and French seem to share the religious sphere of Christianity with the balance appearing to tilt in favor of Egun.

Given the institutional support enjoyed by French coupled with its *de jure* status as the official language of Bénin and the great prestige it enjoys in the society, it is dominant in the formal setting of the school especially in the classroom. This dominance is beginning to wane on the school playground where Egun and Yoruba can be said to be making their presence felt. Also, in the formal setting of the workplace, Egun and Yoruba share the space with French almost on an equal footing.

In light of the situation sketched above, it may not be quite appropriate to describe the Porto Novian linguistic situation in terms of a diglossic relationship. Apart from the dominance of Yoruba among Yoruba adherents of Islam, and the dominance of the French language in the classroom, the functions of Egun, Yoruba, and French seem to overlap in virtually all the domains in Porto Novo. That is, there cannot be said to be a strict domain separation for now. One may safely conclude, therefore, that the major lingua francas of the city are Egun, French, and Yoruba. Furthermore, we seem to be witnessing a process of relinguification and re-ethnification of minority ethnolinguistic groups of Porto Novo with their members being required to acquire not just Egun or French but both and possibly include Yoruba too.

Notes

1 This chapter is part of an ongoing research funded by the University Research Committee, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria. I am grateful to Fiona Mc Laughlin of the University of Florida, Gainesville, for giving me the opportunity to participate at the workshop on the Languages of Urban Africa in March 2006 at Florida, and to Salikoko Mufwene and to Kola Owolabi for useful comments. I am solely responsible for the shortcomings in the chapter.

2 For a full discussion of factors responsible for an upsurge in Anglophone influence in Francophone Africa, see Renau (2002).

3 Information supplied by one of our field assistants.

4 Similar studies have been conducted in the past by researchers through the use of interview schedule and participant observation. For instance, Bruce C. Johnson (1977; 1978) investigated language use at Larteh, a bilingual community in Ghana with the aid of interview schedules. The research found

that Larteh was characterized by relatively stable multilingualism and that the language varieties were, for the most part, associated with different aspects of life in the community. Also, Oyetade (1990) examined the pattern of bilingualism among the two contiguous ethnolinguistic groups of Yoruba and Nupe in Saare/Traragi community with a view to determining the influence of demographic, socioeconomic, and sociocultural variables on their bilingual behavior. He found that Nupe males were more proficient in Yoruba than their female counterparts while among the Yoruba there was no significant difference in the level of proficiency of the male and female subjects. The procedures adopted in these works were adopted for the present investigation. The notable difference, however, is that we did not conduct a comprehension test to verify subjects' claims of proficiency as Oyetade did, due to logistic constraints.

5 Our respondents could not be tested because as urban dwellers, they were too busy to spare the time. Secondly, respondents expressed disgust at constantly being interviewed "without having anything to show for it" in terms of policy implementation, since they believe that every survey was government-sponsored. Furthermore, given the fact that Yoruba and Gun were used daily on radio and television, it was considered safe, at least for now, to work with the self assessment of respondents in terms of their level of proficiency in each of the languages spoken by them. Our assumption seems to have been confirmed given the relatively low number of respondents who claimed any high level of proficiency in reading or writing of indigenous languages. The converse as expected holds true for French.

6 It has been observed that the indigenous languages are freely and frequently used by pupils and students in the precincts of the school the formal setting of the classroom.

7 It must be noted that the French language was used at all levels of administration during the colonial period; this practice has continued even after independence in former French colonies. Therefore, both the educated and the uneducated tend to consider French as the most prestigious medium of communication. Consequently, irrespective of the type of occupation, everyone was expected, and would claim, to be able to communicate in French. This would explain why all respondents, artisans and petty traders inclusive, claim the use French at their place of work. This will be further clarified in our investigation of language use in the market at Porto Novo in a subsequent study.

10 Language choice in Dar es Salaam's billboards[1]

Charles Bwenge

10.1 Introduction

> *Languages coexisting in one society are hardly ever equal, if only because they are associated with demographic strength, power, and prestige. Choosing one language or another or choosing elements of one language or another, therefore, invariably carries social meaning.*
>
> (*Coulmas 2005: 109*)

Coulmas' (2005) observation is very pertinent to the central objective of this chapter, which is to examine how Swahili–English bilingualism in the city of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania is involved as a resource in the construction of social meaning as manifested in the discourse of advertising. Both Swahili and English are official languages in Tanzania and have enjoyed varied degrees of dominance and prestige since independence in 1961. In this regard, Tanzania offers an exceptionally clear case of a postcolonial African nation that, at least up to the late 1980s, had aggressively promoted an indigenous African language, Swahili, as the medium of all modern official communication such as administration and education, while reserving the language of the former colonial power, English, for highly specific domains such as secondary and tertiary education as well as international relations and interactions (Batibo 1995; Mazrui and Mazrui 1998). This policy has resulted in a Swahili–English bilingualism of sorts, and has consequently led to a more or less ideologically antagonistic and pragmatically complementary relationship between the two languages (Blommaert 1997). The eventual outcome has been a linguistic culture in which various social meanings, both in terms of the construction of social categories and of the contextualization of interactions, manifest in the context of production and reproduction of relations of social differences and/or social (in)equalities.

This situation is not only strategically exploited in various types of discourse, but also reproduced by the same discourses. Advertising

discourse is one of them. The discourse of advertising, a more or less urban phenomenon, has long been a subject of study in sociolinguistics and discourse analysis (e.g. O'Barr 1994; Cheshire and Moser 1994; Cook 1992; Ewen 1976; Goddard 1998; Piller 2001) and the majority of scholars concur that advertising does not only simply represent social life, but that the relationship between advertising and society is a two-way street. Subscribing to Corston-Oliver's (1998) point of view, Piller (2001: 156), for instance, stresses that "representations of society in advertising have their basis in the social order, but at the same time, the social order is constantly being re-created by reference to model discourses such as advertising."

The focus of this chapter, therefore, is not only to explore the representation and reproduction of linguistic culture through advertising discourse as revealed in Dar es Salaam's billboard advertisements, but also to analyze and discuss sociolinguistic mechanisms that are at the center of the process of re-creating social meaning.

Asking what languages are used in Dar's advertisements is to ask the obvious: Swahili and English. However, what is particularly intriguing is the absence of bilingual advertisement, at least in billboard ads. Studies on advertising discourse in other parts of the world where two or more languages are spoken or known indicate that code-mixing is not uncommon. For example, Piller (2001: 154) observes that "German advertising now uses multilingualism, mainly in the form of English–German code-switching." Scollon and Scollon (2003) also compare and contrast numerous examples of bilingual signs and commercial ads from Asia, Europe, and North America.

The case of Dar es Salaam is intriguing, especially taking into account that mixing Swahili and English is a common practice in most types of discourse among Tanzanians who have various levels of proficiency in the two languages. The exclusive use of Swahili or English in Dar's billboards will be explored in this study. In the following sections I present a brief sociolinguistic background of Dar, followed by the rationale for focusing on billboards. Next, I describe the data and methods used in this study, then the findings, analysis and discussion, and finally, the conclusion.

10.2 Dar es Salaam's linguistic culture

A visitor arriving in Dar es Salaam for the first time by air or road, driving along Nyerere Road from the Julius Nyerere International airport or along Morogoro Road from upcountry in the west toward the city center, for instance, cannot miss billboard ads that line these two major arteries into the city center. The number of billboards in this city

has mushroomed in recent years, particularly since the advent of economic reforms in the 1990s. One of the interesting pieces of information a visitor is most likely to pick up easily from these billboards is that two different languages are dominant in the city. If they are familiar with the languages, they will at once recognize them as English and Swahili. Each billboard has textual material in Swahili or in English, and in some locations these billboards are mounted a few yards apart. This may index either the presence of some form of an English–Swahili bilingual speaking community, a Swahili speaking community with an English-speaking section of the population, and/or the official status of both languages in this community (Scollon and Scollon 2003).

Indeed, Dar es Salaam is a linguistic capital as well as the administrative and commercial capital of Tanzania. Presumably, all ethnolinguistic groups in the country, which number over 100, are represented in the urban population. The typical Dar resident speaks Swahili fluently as his or her first or second language in addition to his/her ethnolinguistic group language (such as Sukuma, Nyakyusa, Chagga, Gujarati, Arabic, Gogo, Haya, etc.). If a person has attained higher education, he or she may have some level of proficiency in English. Even the less educated recognize the English language and may speak a few words or phrases in it.

Since Swahili and English are the only official languages in Tanzania, they are the only ones used as lingua francas for inter-ethnic communication. They are also the expected languages in public domains as well as in more or less formal settings. In fact, Swahili and English have emerged as the most dominant languages in Tanzanian public space, with Swahili taking the lion's share. These facts explain why we do not see billboard ads in any language other than English and Swahili.

While both languages have facilitated inter-ethnic and international communication, their nature of their coexistence has been, more or less, one of rivalry. Indeed, the (socio)linguistic history of postcolonial Tanzania is marked by an ambivalent and, at times, antagonistic relationship between the two, generated in particular by political ideological factors (language policy) as well as by pragmatic ones (communicative needs) influenced by both national and global socioeconomic dynamics.

10.3 The rise of Swahili and English as dominant languages

Long before European colonization, Swahili had already established itself as a lingua franca in the area. Although controlled by Arab traders, the Indian Ocean trade network that thrived between 1000 B.C and 1800 B.C did not introduce Arabic as a lingua franca in East Africa.

Instead, the trade facilitated the growth and expansion of Swahili, both lexically and geographically. This process empowered Swahili over other local languages such that, by the advent of European expeditions and subsequent missionary and eventually colonial enterprises, Swahili already enjoyed a more prominent role than other African languages. Swahili continued to facilitate inter-ethnic communication as urbanization progressed in colonial and postcolonial East Africa.

British colonialists introduced English as the official language, used mainly in high levels of administration and education. But, at the same time, they promoted Swahili as the medium of communication in lower levels of administration and education, thereby setting the stage for the bifocal language policy and usage that came to dominate the public linguistic scene and public discourse in postcolonial Tanzania.

This trend changed drastically soon after independence when Swahili was declared the national language and six years later, in 1967, declared the official language alongside English. Enormous efforts were made to Swahilize the society, an attempt that was considered an essential strategy for the *ujamaa* (socialist) policy to succeed. Indeed, during the socialist (*ujamaa)* period (1967–1987) Swahili was given greater importance to the extent that it replaced English in most domains of public life. Batibo (1995: 63) provides an explicit account of the drastic changes in the linguistic landscape of Tanzania that took place following the launching of the Arusha Declaration in 1967 which re-oriented the country's development efforts toward the masses and was to dominate the socioeconomic and political scene for the next 20 years. In this ambitious endeavor Swahili assumed a new role of stimulating mass mobilization and political awareness in both urban and rural areas. The sociolinguistic scenario in public space particularly in relatively formal settings that followed the 1967 sociopolitical changes is aptly summarized by Batibo (1995: 64–5) who observes that

> in the domain of administration English remained the medium of the court of appeal and high court (with Kiswahili interpretations), diplomacy and international contacts, as well as foreign trade and cultural exchanges. Swahili, on the other hand, became the primary medium of government business, legislature (except government bills), district courts, law enforcement, general administration, primary courts, and village and ward administration.

In the domain of education, English was retained as the medium of instruction in secondary education, diploma teacher education, tertiary education, and world literature and technical information. Swahili took over as the medium of instruction in upper primary education, adult education, political education and Swahili subjects in secondary

schools, Swahili courses at the university level, certificate teacher education, lower primary education, and the literacy campaign.

As can be seen from the roles that Swahili assumed following the 1967 ideological and sociopolitical changes, it became a language of social promotion. Batibo further notes that Swahili became associated with modernization (education, mass media, business, trade, administration, law, politics, social services, etc.), nationalism, and membership in a wider world. Mazrui and Mazrui (1998) also acknowledge the important role that Swahili has played in the process of urbanization in East Africa. They remark that "rural to urban migration and urban functionality in certain regions of East Africa came to rely quite heavily on some proficiency in Kiswahili" (Mazrui and Mazrui 1998: 128). Indeed, Swahili managed to take over most of the roles which hitherto had been under the domain of English.

Mazrui and Mazrui (1998) also emphasize this linguistic transformation within the political domain whereby the Swahilization of the political process in Tanzania resulted in wider participation and broader political recruitment, and enriched the language in terms of political vocabulary and metaphor. They add,

> it was not only in the political sphere that post-colonial Tanzania made greater use of Kiswahili. Prior to independence, English was the official language of the country. Its acquisition meant greater employment prospects for its citizens. After independence and particularly after Tanzania's move to the left with the Arusha Declaration in particular, Kiswahili was made the language of official business and medium of instruction in primary schools. In addition to its sentimental value as the language of Tanzania's sovereignty and national identity, and its multifarious instrumental value in the economic, political, and social spheres, therefore, Kiswahili now acquired an additional instrumental dimension as the language of white collar employment. (1998: 129)

10.4 The contemporary dynamics of Swahili and English

These sociopolitical and economic changes created a fertile ground for the Tanzanian linguistic culture we see today, especially in public space. Swahili has remained the sole national language and the official language, alongside English, of communication at the national level and is spoken by over 90 percent of the population. It is the language of communication between the government and the people and the language through which important national issues are presented to the public; it is also the language of Parliament, the courts, mosques and

churches, and the language of trade and commerce within the country. Swahili is the majority lingua franca, and it is increasingly becoming the first language of the young generation, especially in Dar es Salaam and other urban centers. Swahili is the main medium of instruction in all public primary schools (approximately 80 percent of all primary school going age) and the language through which children learn their first literacy skills. Although it is not the official medium of instruction in secondary and tertiary education, Swahili is used for most interactions at school, both in as well as out of the classroom. Swahili is a language of business and political communication with many neighboring countries such as Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Roy-Campbell and Qorro 1997: 103). In brief Swahili has continued to enjoy much cultural and political prestige.

Nonetheless, while the state policy de-emphasized English, it retained its prestigious position as the language of higher education and the country's second official language. Thus, the bifocal language policy continued to produce tiny minority educated elites who spoke English in addition to Swahili, and these were consequently the ones eligible for white-collar jobs in urban areas. The higher one goes on the education ladder, the better the proficiency in English, and the greater the chances for socioeconomic advancement. Since access to higher education is limited to a small number of people, the English language is used by a small but economically and politically powerful minority, and its use as an official language is limited to very formal settings or situations where foreigners are involved, in areas such as politics, trade, and commerce.

As economic reforms have opened up doors for multinational operations in the country, the impact of linguistic imperialism, as Phillipson (1992; 2000) calls it, in the guise of globalization, has not spared the country. Current societal obsession with English language is unprecedented. More and more Tanzanians are seeking jobs in multinational companies operating in the country and look beyond Tanzania's borders for employment and business opportunities in areas which favor the knowledge of English. Increasing dependence on foreigner investors and a more globalized world popular culture, very much influenced by the United States, are also boosting the value of English in Tanzania. English continues to enjoy educational, intellectual, and economic prestige within the country.

10.5 Change and continuity: Swahilization and Anglicization processes

The impact of the 1970s Swahilization process is still felt strongly in today's Tanzania but, at the same time, the country has seen a vigorous

resurgence in the popularity of English which is related to its rise as a primary language of the global market-driven economy. Ten years ago, Mazrui and Mazrui (1998: 138) rightly predicted that as the country became more integrated in the global market-driven economy and abandoned its earlier socialist ideals, a kind of tilt in linguistic balance back in favor of English, though not necessarily at the expense of Swahili, would occur. In this regard, Swahili, the majority lingua franca, is more or less associated with national matters and connected to everyday life and relations of solidarity among citizens, thereby serving as a marker of national identity, while English, the elitist lingua franca, is associated with globalization and socioeconomic advancement.

How and where does advertising discourse fit into such a relatively complex linguistic culture? Specifically, how do such aspects as demographic strength, power, and prestige associated with Swahili and English influence the patterns of language use in billboard ads? And, conversely, how does the billboard discourse re-create the linguistic culture in which it operates? These questions will be answered in the remainder of the chapter.

10.6 Billboard advertising in Swahili and English

Billboards are among the most conspicuous advertising media in urban public spheres all over the world. Given the nature of urban areas, billboards and other business signs become necessary for providing information and advertisement. Like other types of advertisement, billboards are used to convey information about the product to potential customers or provide information to members of the public about a particular product or service, persuading people to buy the product or use the service, as well as keeping the organization in the public eye. But still, a billboard is a distinct medium of advertisement with its own distinguishing characteristics. Billboards are large outdoor signboards posted in places with high traffic and typically show large, textual materials printed alongside alluring pictures which are intended to be memorable, enjoyable, or amusing. Unlike other media such as newspapers, radio, or television, billboards are out there as public space for passers-by, addressees, and non-addressee viewers, to view and read whether they like it or not. Billboard ads in their current form are a relatively recent phenomenon in Tanzania.

10.6.1 Data

A relatively recent medium of advertisement in Tanzania, billboards are found along every main road and highway leading to the city of Dar

es Salaam. In September of 2005 I observed, photographed and videotaped a total of 52 billboards in the city. These were posted along a stretch of about 10 miles: along Morogoro Road (a major inlet from upcountry) starting at Ubungo suburb through Kariakoo to the central business district (CBD); then, again, starting from the CBD northwards along Ali H. Mwinyi Road (another artery from Bagamoyo) through Kinondoni suburb to Kijitonyama suburb.

Textual material in the billboards was either entirely in Swahili or entirely in English. Figure 10.1 shows a Swahili *Vodacom* (mobile phone service provider company) advertisement posted on a billboard mounted on a rooftop of a four-storey building in the Manzese suburb.

An English example of a Barclays Bank advertisement on a billboard in Kariakoo area next to the CBD is shown in Figure 10.2.

Figure 10.1 Vodacom billboard as was seen in Manzese, September 2005

Figure 10.2 Barclays billboard ad in Kariakoo area, September 2005

Billboards considered in this study were those officially managed by recognized international and national advertising companies including A1 Outdoor, Tan Advert, Clear Channel, and Alliance Media. These billboards seemed to meet international standards. They consisted of large signboards, professionally mounted alongside main roads or placed on the sides and tops of buildings, and the advertisements were professionally designed showing large, witty slogans splashed with distinctive color pictures as the two ads in Figures 10.1 and 10.2 show. Moreover, since the companies that manage them operate commercially, the cost of advertising is relatively high, and therefore advertisers make careful decisions on what and what not to display, including choice of language, in order to optimize rewards.

Out of all billboard ads studied, 33 (63 percent) were in Swahili and 19 (37 percent) in English. Out of the 10 billboard ads between Ubungo (10 miles from CBD) and Kariakoo (3 miles from CBD), 8 (80 percent) were in Swahili and only 2 (20 percent) were in English. Between Kariakoo and Mnazi Mmoja (one mile from CBD) 14 billboards were identified. Eight (57 percent) of these were in Swahili and 6 (43 percent) were in English. Nineteen billboards were observed around the CBD area, out of which 9 (47 percent) were in Swahili and 10 (53 percent) were in English. Then, along Ali H. Mwinyi Road from the CBD toward Bagamoyo, between Kinondoni and Kijitonyama suburbs, 9 billboards were observed. Eight (89 percent) of these were in Swahili and only 1 (11 percent) was in English.

These numbers indicate that both languages are used in advertisement discourse, but Swahili remains the dominant one. This is not surprising given its position as the majority lingua franca (every advertiser would like to reach as many potential customers as possible) and also its status as a marker of national identity, and even the Anglophone educated elites speak Swahili and have nationalistic feelings too.

10.6.2 Findings

The main finding with regard to language distribution in the billboards is that ads in English increase gradually as one drives from the suburbs toward the city center. Along the trajectory from Ubungo to the CBD, billboards with English texts increased from 20 percent to 43 percent to 53 percent and, conversely, those in Swahili increased from 47 percent to 57 percent to 80 percent along the trajectory from the CBD toward the suburbs, thus location appears to play a significant role in language choice. Notwithstanding, in the CBD area, the center of commerce, the language of the billboards was divided more or less evenly between Swahili and English.

Among other factors besides proximity to the city center that could potentially contribute to this distribution of billboard advertisements in Swahili and English are the operational base or home country of the company whose products are being advertised, and the patterns of consumption. The operational base of a company advertising a product or service is a possible motivational factor for language choice. Multinational corporations have their base in the West and their medium of operation is English, consequently they may view English as a marker of internationalism in their ads. For example, companies such as KLM, DHL, and Holiday Inn, to mention only a few, advertise only in English. With regard to the type of product or service being advertised, if the targeted consumer is the educated English-speaking elite, then the ad is likely to be in English. For example, it was found that the great majority of advertisements related to international banking and financial services (e.g. Barclays Bank), air travel (e.g. KLM), parcel delivery (e.g. DHL) and the like were in English, whereas the majority of billboards relating to public information, political campaigns, health products, cellular phones, lotteries, and other more locally focused concerns were in Swahili without duplicated ads in English. For example, the following ads appeared at least twice along this stretch and all were in Swahili: Salama Kondom (condom manufacturer), TANESCO (public warning), Aha toothpaste, Sportsman cigarettes, TTCL prepaid phone cards, KiSMATi lotto (lottery), Vodacom phonecards, and Celtel phonecards.

While the location, operational base, and consumption orientation as viewed above may account for the differences in language choices between English and Swahili in advertising discourse particularly between the CBD and the suburbs, between foreign- and local-based operations, and between elite- and mass-oriented consumption, these variables may not adequately explain the presence of billboard ads placed in the same location. Some of these are foreign-based but they are household names, yet some are printed in Swahili and some in English. In this regard, I will next consider two billboards which were located in Manzese suburb, one of the poorer and more densely populated suburbs of the city. One billboard carried an ad for the soft drink company, Coca-Cola, and the other carried an ad for the cell phone service provider Vodacom.

10.7 Coca and Voda: the local and the global

Coca and Voda, as Coca-Cola and Vodacom are popularly referred to in Swahili, are popular brands that are household names throughout Tanzania, and for that reason they are singled out here for illustrative purposes. By their nature, Coca-Cola soft drinks and Vodacom cellular

phone service are mass-oriented consumer products. Indeed, if globalization has penetrated to the remotest corners of the country, these two companies are certainly at the forefront. They are found in every corner of the country, in rural and urban areas, used by people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and regardless of gender, age, and religion. The same soft drink that is popular in New York city, for instance, is also very popular and available to a poor peasant in a remote village in Tanzania. Likewise, the same peasant can be reached through cellphone (Voda) service from anywhere in the world. So it could be reasonably argued that both Coca and Voda are mass-oriented consumer products but, at the same time, global products like KLM and DHL. Interestingly, on its former website in 2005, the Coca-Cola Company clearly stated that "while the Coca-Cola Company is a global company with some of the world's most widely recognised brands, the Coca-Cola business in Tanzania, as in each country where we operate, is a local business."

Another similarity between the two, then, is that both are internationally based companies but locally operated. The Coca-Cola Company is an American company and Vodacom is a South African-based company. At the time of this study (September 2005), each company was advertising aggressively in both languages in various forms and media. Each had a remarkable number of billboard ads along Morogoro Road, including those that were posted at Manzese, thus posing a challenge to the three variables for language choice identified above regarding outdoor advertising discourse, that is, consumption orientation, operational base, and location.

At Manzese, Coca-Cola's billboard ad, seen in Figure 10.3, was in English with the following text: *Real refreshment* / *Real.* Vodacom's billboard ad in the same location had the following text written in Swahili:

Taifa Moja. Mtandao Mmoja, meaning "one nation, one network."

What are the motivations underlying the choice of *Taifa Moja* or *Real*? Are these companies targeting the same potential audience? If so, what motivates the choice of language that they made? If a German company in Germany, for example, chooses to include English in its ad in order to be perceived as a global player (Piller 2001: 161), is Vodacom, a South African company in Tanzania not aware of this valuable attribute to make use of it? Or is Coca-Cola not aware of whatever is motivating Vodacom to choose Swahili? Since Swahili is the majority lingua franca and English spoken by the tiny minority, why do these companies not employ methods used elsewhere by having a text printed in both languages on the same billboard?

Figure 10. 3 Coca-Cola billboard as was seen in Manzese, September 2005

First, I assume that both companies are well aware of the linguistic culture existing in Dar es Salaam and that they are using sophisticated techniques to advertise their products. Everything included in their ads has no doubt been considered seriously and carefully. Given the nature of advertising techniques which often employ an appeal to emotion and association with desirable imagery (attractive models and appealing landscapes) to make the product seem equally desirable, what we see here is a well-calculated exploitation of Swahili–English bilingual resources based on the advertisers' knowledge of the existing linguistic culture in this community as previously described. Each advertiser is attempting to exploit whatever is represented through the two languages and is, at the same time, engaging in the reproduction of societal linguistic culture.

Coca is exploiting the vigorous resurgence in English popularity related to its rise as a primary language of the global market-driven economy. And Voda is exploiting the persistent strong pride that Tanzanians have in their national language, Swahili, as a more local marker of national identity. Thus both are utilizing the appeal to emotion and association techniques through linguistic choices. English is associated with globalization and Swahili with nationalism, which in turn enhance myths and facts related to the two languages.

Sociolinguists generally agree that language serves two main purposes, the obvious and equally important, the not-so-obvious: that is

communicating information and defining the social situation respectively (e.g. Coulmas 2005; Fasold 1984; Fardon and Furniss 1994; Sperber and Wilson 1995; Myers-Scotton 1998). Coulmas (2005: 109), for example, observes that multilingual research has revealed that the languages coexisting in one society are hardly ever equal, if only because they are associated with demographic strength, power, and prestige. He further argues that "choosing one language or another, or choosing elements of one language or another, therefore, invariably carries social meaning." In this view, it can be assumed that advertisers in this speech community are quite aware of the existing linguistic culture, namely the languages spoken and the ways people think about them, including their stereotypes, prejudices and myths, especially with regard to both instrumental and sentimental values embedded in both languages, and that are attempting to make use of these values. The short history of Swahili and English languages in Tanzania narrated above entails the process through which these languages have acquired their respective instrumental (functional) and sentimental (symbolic) values which also manifest themselves in advertising discourse.

10.8 A complementary relationship between Swahili and English

With respect to the issue of text, in the sense of linguistic forms (Cook 1992), Dar es Salaam's billboard advertising discourse indicates that a choice between Swahili and English is motivated by a need of advertisers (in a role of speakers) to convey both messages of referentiality (i.e. what the texts literally denote) and messages of intentionality (i.e. what the texts connote). In other words, messages of intentionality are social meanings conveyed by the texts in addition to those that the words literally denote. That is, when advertisers are "talking" by choosing one language over the other to present information about their products or services, they are, at the same time, "saying" (expressing) something about a social aspect represented or associated with that language. This claim prompts a major question: how do both types of advertisers, that is, those who choose Swahili and those who choose English, succeed in saying what they wish to say? How do they convey their messages of intentionality to the same potential viewers in the same location?

Models of language choice that assume speakers as rational actors may constitute the most appropriate base for explaining the language choice intricacy observed in Dar es Salaam's billboard discourse. Of particular interest is Myers-Scotton's markedness model (1993a; 1998) whose premise is that

> all linguistic codes or varieties come to have social and psychological associations in the speech communities in which they are used. Given these associations, the use of a particular code is viewed in terms of the unmarked versus marked opposition in reference to the extent its use "matches" community expectations for the interaction type or genre where it is used: what community norms would predict is unmarked; what is not predicted is marked. (1998: 5)

Without any doubt, in a bilingual situation advertisers, like other users of languages in question, make choices about what language to use in their ads. The ultimate goal of an ad is to convince the public to buy the product in question. There are several techniques that are employed by advertisers in this process. As I have noted above, the linguistic culture in a given society is one of the major resources for advertising techniques. A choice of language or a variety of language in advertising discourse can serve both purposes, conveying a message of referentiality or a message of intentionality. In view of the markedness model, for a more successful conveyance of the message of intentionality a choice must be a marked one. While elaborating the markedness model, Myers-Scotton (1998: 22) makes a very strong claim that "linguistic choices fall along a multidimensional continuum from more unmarked to more marked and that their ordering will vary, depending on the specific discourse type." In this view, the choice of Swahili or English in billboard advertisement in Dar es Salaam could be interpreted as more or less marked, reflecting the underlying motivation for such choices on the part of the advertiser. The potentiality of markedness embodied in the two languages plays an important role in the above observed patterns of usage in advertisement discourse. Advertisers are exploiting the social relationships of Swahili and English as both languages have come to construct the existing linguistic culture. The markedness model further asserts that the goal of speakers in choosing one language over the other is to enhance rewards and minimize costs. "Speakers choose one variety over another because of benefits they expect from that choice, relative to its costs." (Myers-Scotton 1998: 19)

10.8.1 The markedness of English

Although English is spoken proficiently by a tiny minority of the population, the language has become part and parcel of the country's linguistic culture. The power of English as a global language cannot be ignored. It is not only recognized by the great majority in its spoken and written forms, but it is also recognized for its social value as a language of

sophisticated ideas and practices, perfection, success, and international popular culture.

A billboard with an English slogan posted in the middle of a poor suburb as was the case of Coca-Cola in Manzese is primarily intended to convey a message of intentionality to its viewers. The majority of the Manzese population, for instance, may not necessarily be able to read or need to understand what the word "real" means, but their linguistic cultural knowledge will enable them to recognize it as an English word, and consequently associate the product with everything associated with English language in Tanzanian society including quality and prestige. For a few English-speaking linguistic elites, an ad in English in the same location may be a less marked choice in terms of messages of intentionality. Let me cite one recent anecdote from a Tanzanian newspaper report (www.IPPMedia.com, May 29, 2007) on a survey conducted in Bagamoyo District about English or Swahili as a medium of instruction. Among those interviewed was a form one student (ninth grader) whom the reporter describes and quotes as follows:

> (name) . . . knows very little English and during an on-the-spot reading test he could hardly read even a headline without difficulty, but still prefers English to Kiswahili as the official teaching language. "I would like to study . . . and study to higher levels and if possible outside the country. Therefore I must have a good command of the language so that I can fulfill that dream."

There are millions of young people in Tanzania with similar attitudes, all of whom are potential customers of products like Coca-Cola. In this way, companies like Coca-Cola effectively exploit the potentiality of markedness embedded in language choices in relation to public space (physical and social) and time.

10.8.2 The markedness of Swahili

The power of Swahili as a national language and the most widely spoken language in the country is undebatable. Although Swahili is currently not as valued economically as English, most Tanzanians still have a strong pride in Swahili as a symbol of their national culture and national identity. This constitutes part of Tanzania's linguistic culture and is consequently effectively exploited by outdoor advertisers. Foreign-based and globally based communication technology companies such as Vodacom opt to evoke an emotional response from the public by choosing Swahili language in most of their advertisements posted in various locations as the sample data in this study indicate. For example, a Voda ad slogan in Swahili placed at the top of a building in Dar's CBD, the heart of linguistic (English) elitist and global operations, may appear

out of place, and therefore more or less marked. The markedness perceptions may come from both the educated elites and the less educated masses in relation to the advertiser. Most Tanzanians are impressed to see a foreign operator talking to them in their language even in situations and locations where that language is more expected—this is a manifestation of markedness regarding messages of intentionality. For example, Voda's slogan, *Taifa Moja* conveys both messages of referentiality and intentionality to a wider public by invoking an emotional reaction related to nationalistic sentiments.

10.9 Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that the language use patterns in Dar es Salaam's billboards are not only a reflection of Tanzanian linguistic culture, but also agents of its reproduction, particularly with regard to language use in public space. Advertisers who assume the communicative role of speakers, through choices and perhaps more importantly through configurations they make, effectively exploit the social relationships of two languages, Swahili and English, that are expected in public space to convey their messages of intentionality in addition to messages of referentiality. The socio-historical context of linguistic culture in Tanzania indicates that at some level the two languages appear to compete with each other in public space and at others they seem to complement each other, not only in conveying messages of referentiality (e.g. factual information) but also in conveying messages of intentionality simply by the way they are chosen in a given physical and social space.

Although this study draws on data from a limited sample of outdoor advertising discourse in urban Tanzania, my central concern here has been to provide a qualitative account of the way that the dynamics of Tanzanian linguistic culture are reflected in the discourse of outdoor advertising in Dar es Salaam, supported by some preliminary statistical information. Each language continues to enjoy its own sphere of dominance and popularity, Swahili as a national lingua franca and strong symbol of nationalism, and English as a global lingua franca and strong symbol of elitism.

10.10 Afterword

Interestingly, in 2007, 2 years after the fieldwork for this study was completed, I traveled the same roads in Dar es Salaam and noticed a dramatic change in the use of the two languages. For example, the Coca-Cola billboard in the poor suburb of Manzese had changed from English to Swahili. Perhaps most interesting was the case of Barclays Bank

which not only had billboards in Swahili posted at various locations around the city, but the message of referentiality specifically emphasized the less-privileged as the targeted group:

> *Mawazo yangu siku zote ni kuwa mkopo wa Barclayloan ni kwa ajili ya watu wenye kipato kikubwa! Kumbe ni kwa kila mtu!*
> All these days my opinion has been that the Barclayloan program is only for those people with high incomes! Now I know that it is for everyone!

This dramatic change obviously calls for a follow-up study regarding the intricacy and dynamics of language choice and configurations in space and time in terms of messages of referentiality and intentionality in outdoor advertising discourse in Dar es Salaam. Further research should yield a more complete picture of the complementarity between Swahili and English that this change seems to hint at.

Acknowledgment

1 I would like express my gratitude to the Office of Research and Graduate programs and the Center for African Studies at the University of Florida whose funding supported this study as part of the Languages of Urban Africa project.

Appendix

Billboards: Dar es Salaam data (September 2005)

Advertiser	Advertised product/service	Language	Text	Translation	Board comp.
Vodacom Mobile phone company	**VodaJAMAA** (phonecard**)**	Swahili	Punguzo la 10% Kwa namba 2 Unazozipenda zaidi Kutoka Vodacom pekee **Taifa Moja Mtandao Mmoja**	*Discount of 10% from Vodacom only* *on your most frequently called number* ***One Nation One Network***	A1 outdoor
Celtel Mobile phone company	**Celtel** **(**phonecard)	Swahili	Maisha. Ni kufurahi Tenga Muda. Kuwa Karibu na Wale unaowajali **Furahia Maisha Yako**	*Life is to enjoy* *Set time aside. Stay in touch with your loved ones* ***Enjoy Your Life***	CLEAR CHANNEL
Vodacom Mobile phone company	**Vodacom** (phonecard)	Swahili	**Taifa Moja Mtandao Mmoja** Mtandao unaoongoza Tanzania	***One Nation One Network*** *The leading network in Tanzania*	Alliance Media
Salama Condom	Salama Kondom	Swahili	Kama Kweli Unampenda Utamlinda **Salama Kondom Kinga Madhubuti**	*If you really love him/her, you will protect him/her* ***Salama Kondom*** ***Perfect Protection***	A1 Outdoor

(*Continued*)

Billboards: Dar es Salaam data (September 2005)—Cont'd

Advertiser	Advertised product/service	Language	Text	Translation	Board comp.
TTCL Telephone company	TTCL prepaid phone card	Swahili	**Dhihirisha hisia Zako**	*Reveal your feelings*	A1 Outdoor
CocaCola Soft drink company	CocaCola	English	Real **Real refreshment**	_	CLEAR CHANNEL
CCM Political party	Presidential campaign (Mr. Kikwete)	Swahili	**Chagua CCM** **Chagua Kikwete**	*Vote CCM* *Vote Kikwete*	–
Celtel Mobile phone company	Celtel phonecard	Swahili	Maisha. Ni Kufurahi Tenga. Muda. Kuwa Karibu na Wale unaowajali **Furahia Maisha Yako**	*Life is to enjoy* *Set time aside. Stay in touch with your loved ones* ***Enjoy Your Life***	A1 Outdoor
TTCL Telephone company	TTCL prepaid Phonecards	Swahili	**timiza malengo yako**	***Meet your goals***	A1 Outdoor
Celtel Mobile phone company	Celtel phonecard	Swahili	**Maisha** **Ni Kufurahi**	***Life*** ***Is to Enjoy***	A1 Outdoor

Barclays Bank	Business Solution Boost	English	**What every business needs!** **Fuelling Your Business** Call 0744 724 365 today!	_	CLEAR CHANNEL
TANESCO Power company	Public warning	Swahili	Uunganishaji Umeme Kiholela Unaua **Tunaangaza Maisha Yako**	*Unauthorized power connections kills* ***We are your life's light***	A1 Outdoor
Konyagi Tanzania Distillers Liquor company	Konyagi liquor	English	**The rhythm of the nation the spirit of the nation**	_	CLEAR CHANNEL
Skin Glow Beauty company	Skin Glow	Swahili	**Weupe kwa Njia Salama**	***A safe way to become light skinned***	CLEAR CHANNEL
JERO	JERO Phone voucher	Swahili	**Kamata JERO Chapchap** Vocha ya shilingi 500	***Grab JERO quickly*** *Shs.500 Voucher*	–
NBC National Bank of Commerce	Banking, ATM Visa	English	**Banking on Progress**	–	Private
Villa Mar Furniture company	Furniture	English	**For all of your Home and Office Furniture at affordable prices** **Visit us in less than…..**	_	A1 Outdoor

(*Continued*)

Billboards: Dar es Salaam data (September 2005)—Cont'd

Advertiser	Advertised product/service	Language	Text	Translation	Board comp.
Aha Toothpaste company	Aha toothpaste	Swahili	**Jiamini** Dawa ya Meno	*Be self-confident*	CLEAR CHANNEL
Exim Bank (Tanzania Ltd.)	MoneyGram International Money Transfer	English	**AN EDGE ABOVE THE REST** The fast, safe way to send and receive money worldwide	–	A1 Outdoor
TCC Tanzania Cigaratte company	Sportsman cigarette	Swahili	**Ladha ya Urafiki**	*The taste of friendship*	A1 Outdoor
Ndege Insurance Brokers	Insurance	English		–	Private
Vodacom Mobile phone company	VodaJAMAA Phonecards	Swahili	**VodaJamaa Punguzo la 10% Kwa namba 2 unazozipenda**	*Discount of 10% on your most 2 frequently called numbers*	Alliance Media
Whitedent Toothpaste company	Whitedent Herbal	English	**Natural Herbs for Strong Teeth**	–	A1 Outdoor

TCC Cigarette company	Sportsman cigarette	Swahili	**Ladha ya Urafiki** Onyo: uvutaji wa sigara ni hatari kwa afya yako Warning: Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health	*The taste of friendship*	A1 Outdoor
Salama Condom company	Salama Kondom	Swahili	Kama Kweli Unampenda, Utamlinda **Salama Kondom Kinga Madhubuti**	*If you really love him/her, you will protect him/her* ***Salama Kondom Perfect Protection***	Tan Advert
CocaCola Soft drink company	CocaCola	English	**Real refreshment** real	–	–
Vodacom Mobile phone company	Vodacom	Swahili	Asante Tanzania kwa kutuwezesha kuwa No. 1. 5 sherehe za kuzaliwa	*Thank you Tanzania* *For making us No. 1* *5th anniversary*	–
A1 Outdoor Ad company	Advertising	English	Don't Drink and Drive Call 0748 700 600	–	A1 Outdoor
Mosquito net company	Mosquito net	Swahili	Malaria huua Mtanzania mmoja Kila dakika tano Tumia chandarua chenye dawa **Malaria Haikubaliki**	*Malaria kills one Tanzanian every five minutes* *Use a mosquito net with repellent* ***Malaria is not acceptable***	Tan Advert
Aha Toothpaste company	Aha Toothpaste	Swahili	**Jiamini**	Be self-confident	A1 Outdoor

(*Continued*)

Billboards: Dar es Salaam data (September 2005)—Cont'd

Advertiser	Advertised product/service	Language	Text	Translation	Board comp.
KiSMATi Lottery company	KiSMATi Lotto	Swahili	**psst!** **Unajihisi** **Mwenye bahati?**	*psst!* *Do you feel to be lucky?*	A1 Outdoor
Holiday Inn	Hotel service	English	**Straight On** **Relax** **It's Holiday Inn**	–	A1 Outdoor
Diamond Trust Bank	Banking	English	Banking with Diamond Trust **Banking Made Easy**	–	A1 Outdoor
TTCL Phone company	TTCL prepaid Phonecard	Swahili	**Imarisha Biashara Yako**	***Strengthen your business***	–
Nokia	Nokia 6230 handset	English	**Enjoy hidden Powers**	–	–
Celtel Mobile phone company	Celtel Phonecard	Swahili	Maisha. Ni Kufurahi Tenga Muda kuwa karibu na wale unaowajali. **Furahia Maisha Yako**	*Life is to enjoy* *Set time aside. Stay in touch with your loved ones* ***Enjoy Your Life***	A1 Outdoor
Pepsi Soft drink company	PepsiCola	English	**DARE FOR MORE**	–	A1 Outdoor

LG Mobile phone accessories company	LG Cellular phone accessories	English	**Life's Good**	–	CLEAR CHANNEL
TTCL Phone company	TTCL prepaid Phonecard	Swahili	**Mwambie unampenda**	***Tell her/him that you love her/him***	A1 Outdoor
KLM Airline company	Airline service International	English	Only one Airline gives you the world everyday **Your best Airline in Tanzania**	–	A1 Outdoor
Jubilee Insurance	Insurance service	English	**You've got a friend**	–	A1 Outdoor
Mirinda Soft drink company	Mirinda	English	**Taste the THRILL pineapple**	–	GMI
Vodacom Mobile phone company	Vodacom	English	Welcome to Vodashop Ohio **Tanzania's leading cellular Network**	–	Alliance Media
DHL Mailing company	Mail/parcel delivery services	English	**Moving heavy goods?** **THINK DHL**	–	–

(*Continued*)

Billboards: Dar es Salaam data (September 2005)—Cont'd

Advertiser	Advertised product/service	Language	Text	Translation	Board comp.
CRDB Banking company	crdb SMS Banking	Swahili	Taarifa ya Kuingia kwa Mshahara Kujua salio katika Akaunti yako Taarifa Fupi ya Akaunti Na Mengineyo **The Bank that listens**	–	A1 Outdoor
CRDB Banking company	crdb SMS banking	English	Salary Credit Advice Balance Inquiry Mini statement And much more **The bank that listens**	–	–
TCC Cigarette company	Sportsman Cigarette	Swahili	**Ladha ya Urafiki**	**The taste of friendship**	A1 Outdoor
KiSMATi Lottery company	KiSMATi Lotto	Swahili	**Nimekuona!** **Umecheza leo?**	**I did see you!** **Did you play?**	A1 Outdoor

Vodacom Mobile phone company	Voda Phonecard	Swahili	**Biashara Kwanza** **Kutuma muda wa maongezi. Bure kutoka Vodacom**	**Business First** **To send talking time. Free from Vodacom**	–
CCM Political party	Presidential election campaign	Swahili	Mafanikio 1995–2005 Dhamira 2005–2010 Uchumi unakua Wanafunzi wanaongezeka Wanawake wanawezeshwa Miundombinu inaboreshwa Tutaendeleza mafanikio kwa ARI MPYA NGUVU MPYA KASI MPYA **Chagua CCM** **Maisha Bora kwa kila Mtanzania**	Achievements 1995–2005 Objectives 2005–2010 The economy is growing Student enrollment is growing Women are being empowered Infrastructures are improved We will further these achievements with new vigor, new energy, new pace **Vote CCM** **Good life to every Tanzanian**	A1 Outdoor

11 Innovations on the fringes of the Kiswahili-speaking world

Haig Der-Houssikian

11.1 Introduction

Analyzing an urban Kiswahili (Swahili) dialect anywhere in the larger Swahili-speaking world, which encompasses the core East African countries of Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania, and much of eastern and southern Congo (until recently Zaire) as well as Burundi and Rwanda, must accommodate two perspectives. One is the rather strong hypothesis that any form of Swahili is to a great extent the product of creolization. The other is the equally strong hypothesis that any form of Swahili reflects those linguistic features that are prevalent in the geographic region in question. The former perspective admits that creolization, if that term is appropriate, is restricted to the lexicon. The structure of Swahili in all linguistic domains is predominantly, if not fully, Bantu. The latter perspective is not completely demonstrated yet. A serious observation does, however, suggest that there are universal Bantu shifts, or movements, in the direction of morphological simplification. This means a degradation of the noun class and agreement system at different points in the system and at different degrees of speed. This chapter will not go into the current debate about the discussions of the noun class system and agreement in terms of gender or otherwise since it is not relevant to the purpose at hand.

The database for this analysis comprises personal observations by Linette Spink[1] in Bujumbura, Burundi, over a 2-year period and personal letters written to her after her return to the United States. The letters are written with strict correspondence to the register and dialect of spoken Swahili by Bujumbura residents. A brief example from one of the letters will illustrate this claim:

(1) batu mingi bana ku ni uliza
"many people ask me about you"

There are here several dialect-specific deviations from standard and literate coastal Swahili (SS) unique to the Bujumbura database. The most crucial point of deviation is the insertion of two object agreement prefixes.

(2) ba-na-*ku-ni*-uliza
3PL.S-Pres-2SG.O-1SG.O-ask
"they ask me about you" (<they-Tense-you-me-ask)

This phrase will be discussed again in greater detail later in the chapter.

This chapter extracts from the database those morphological and syntactic features that are peculiar to Burundi, in particular to Bujumbura, and exposes the relevant deviations from SS. There are many issues relating to the written form of "words" that appear in the data. Ignoring for the moment issues of word formation, which is not addressed in this chapter, and other deviations, *bana ku ni uliza* would be written as one word, *banakuniuliza* in SS. The definition of what constitutes a "word" and how different individuals, regardless of dialect, in Swahili and Bantu languages in general, address this matter either through stress and intonation or in written and print form remains unresolved. It needs to be admitted at the outset that there are few, if any, materials available on Bujumbura or Burundian Swahili in general. Material on Swahili dialectology at large, urban or otherwise, code-switching, and so on is rich. The very nature of Swahili and its history of expansion from Zanzibar and the Kenya coast to the hinterland lends itself very attractively to this kind of research. The resistance to it in Uganda and parts of Kenya, its adoption in Tanzania and its unbridled expansion beyond is full of intrigue. It could make for a mystery novel. The role of and involvement of both German and British colonial policies are major contributors. But none of these factors have had a presence or a role in Burundi. A quotation from Spink is appropriate here:

> I have yet to find published material that directly pertains to Swahili in Burundi. Burundian Swahili exemplifies the very nature and process of Bantu language change and creolization, and how this particular variant [Bujumbura Swahili] contributes to our knowledge and understanding of these changes. To fill this gap in the body of knowledge, this proposal will therefore concentrate on the type of Swahili used in the city of Bujumbura. (1999, p. 10 of a chapter entitled Swahili in Bujumbura and Burundi)

There are many letters involved in the overall analysis. They reinforce each other in terms of distinctions that are brought out as deviations. One of the letters that seems to contain many of the observable dialect-specific features is selected for this chapter. The above example is from that letter and will be discussed again. For obvious reasons the author of the letter used will remain anonymous. All references to individuals that might contribute to identification are altered. This chapter is primarily an attempt to capture a dialect in process of formation in an

urban setting. It is not a definitive or a final statement on Bujumbura Swahili. It is appropriate here to quote Spink's perspective on this matter.

> As of yet it is unclear whether Burundian Swahili is one or a combination of the following: (1) a second language spoken by a populace lacking formal training in standard Swahili, (2) a creole based on Swahili, French, and Kirundi . . ., or (3) a dialect of Swahili. (1999, p. 1 of Introduction)
>
> My primary and initial hypothesis is that the first and last of the three possibilities mentioned above are the most likely candidates. (1999, p. 1 of Introduction)

11.2 The sociolinguistic setting

The sociolinguistic backdrop of the dialect in question is presented below as observed and explained by Spink (1999) in her chapter entitled "Swahili in Bujumbura and Burundi." Occasionally specific portions of her observations are set apart due to the significance of those observations. Burundians generally use French, Kirundi, and Swahili. The choice of language is motivated by the location and social setting where speech acts occur. The large number of refugees who moved to Tanzania and Congo during the long duration of the regional conflict and then returned to Burundi has played a significant role. The mosque and the small business market place are locations where Swahili usage is certain. Surprisingly, however, Spink makes the following observations:

> In the area of academia, the University of Burundi, French is the language used for discussing official matters, and for official ceremonies, but Kirundi is often used in those settings where arguments become heated. Governmental ceremonies are conducted in both French and Kirundi, but lunch and teatime conversations, in my experience depend on the competency of the speaker and addressee, and may well incorporate Swahili. (1999: 5–6)
>
> Among the younger generation, Swahili is used by young adults, teens, and children of all social classes who live in and were raised in Bujumbura. The use of Swahili implies solidarity among a select group which is rejecting parental values and using Swahili as a part of their social rebellion against established expectations. (1999: 7)

It is readily apparent from the letters which form the database that Bujumbura Swahili incorporates the multilingual context of Burundi as a whole as well as that of the urban context of Bujumbura where multilingual contact is at a maximum. It is also interesting that whereas certain of the lexical and structural features seem unique to Bujumbura, many others are shared by second language speakers of Swahili in north

central and north western Tanzania as well as native speakers of Kirundi and other Bantu languages in the broad geographic vicinity.

Frequency and systematicity are the criteria used to distinguish between those variations from SS that may be ad hoc from those that have become or are becoming the new urban system. Spink makes a further claim that the places in the structure of the language where deviations occur have significant predictive value in terms of where else, in what other Swahili speech communities and other Bantu languages, such deviations would be expected.

For those readers who may not be fully informed of either the sociolinguistic setting which motivates the register of language used or the structure of SS, here is a somewhat more extended description based on Spink's observations, followed by a very brief morphological representation of SS nouns and verbs.

Burundi is bordered by Tanzania in the east and south, Rwanda to the north, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) to the west, just above the tip of Lake Tanganyika. Burundians use three main languages—Kirundi, French, and Swahili—in descending order of frequency. A former Belgian colony, Burundi obtained its independence in 1962 and continued with French as well as Kirundi as its official languages. In the school systems, French instruction begins at the elementary level. Even though French is the medium of instruction, the most frequent language of teacher–student conversation is Kirundi. Kirundi is taught as a formal subject but textbooks for other subjects are in French. It is difficult to have reliable statistics on literacy in either French or Kirundi. The estimate without specific reference to language is just over 48 percent. Of the media in Burundi, Swahili is only represented with any consistency through radio news broadcasts. Television and newspapers have limited reach in the population at large. Swahili assumes a formal status in education only at the university level and then only as an elective language course. Spink raises the question, "why then study the use of Swahili in Burundi?" (1999: 3). She gives the following answer:

> There are several reasons including its frequency of use, its use as a social marker in the areas of religion, trade and social rebellion, and most importantly its innovative variability from the 'received' standard. (1999: 3)

The majority of Swahili speakers live in Bujumbura and along the Tanzanian and Congolese borders. A location in Bujumbura where one is certain to hear Swahili is the market place. Burundians use Swahili among themselves for small business transactions such as negotiating prices and to show off knowledge of a second language. This is not to

say that they would only use Swahili. If the Burundians engaged in market place bargaining have any degree of Swahili proficiency, they will use Swahili. Swahili is also used for Islamic worship at the mosque. It may also be used, though unpredictably, on the way to and from the mosque. In contrast, Protestant and Catholic church services are conducted strictly in either French or Kirundi. Swahili then could be considered a marker of religious faith, but not entirely so.

The market place and the mosque are the only places where one can be certain to hear Swahili spoken. Other occurrences of Swahili are not bound by physical space. They occur naturally in a variety of unexpected speech situations. Note Spink's quotation above in reference to heated arguments switching to Kirundi and lunch and teatime exchanges switching to Kirundi and Swahili in academic and government ceremonies, respectively. In other words, whereas French and Kirundi are the languages of choice among the educated, Swahili seems to make inroads at the informal level in that same demographic segment of society. There may be some among an older generation of Burundians who deny the presence of Swahili and perceive French as the language among the educated and Kirundi as the home language. In reality, teens and young adults of all social classes who live in and were raised in Bujumbura use Swahili for concurrent reasons of solidarity, establishing comfort zones among themselves, and rebellion against adult or parental expectations and authority. Place, class, context, comfort zone, and rebellion constitute the venues whereby Swahili makes inroads into urban Burundian life. These have been accelerated by the proximity of Tanzania under circumstances of social upheavals that have caused large numbers of Burundians to move back and forth between Burundi and Tanzania.

There are two broad factors that bring about and legitimize the designation of a distinctly urban Bujumbura dialect or register of Swahili. One is the "underground" use of Swahili. The other is the almost total lack of formal instruction in Swahili. Swahili usage under these circumstances becomes vulnerable to a kind of linguistic "reckless abandon" (RA) where people use it as best they can on the one hand and on the other, adopt features to which they are exposed from adjacent northeastern Tanzanian colloquial Swahili speech as well as features from Kirundi, a Bantu language like Swahili. RA is particularly open to code-switching in all its facets with French a primary lexical source. These circumstances, if allowed to persist long enough, inevitably begin to assume the status of a standard language as more and more people speak it and reinforce the dialect. In other words a distinctly urban Bujumbura dialect of Swahili is in the process of emerging. From here on RA will refer to this emerging dialect. If and when formal instruction is introduced, SS as defined earlier would have a hard time competing with RA.

11.3 Standard Swahili structure

Here is a brief and simplified representation of SS morphological structure and the mostly alliterative system of noun class and agreement. The following is a simple natural sentence.

(3) Watoto wangu wanawajua wageni
children my know guests
"My children know [the] guests"

Notice the prototypical word order of a sentence in a Bantu language. The subject noun S(noun), "children" in this case, is in sentence initial position. All references to the S follow, "my" in this case. The verb (V), "know," follows the S and its referents. The verb must agree with both the S and the object noun O(noun) if the latter is animate (human or live animal), "guest" in this case.

Every noun belongs to a noun class. Each class is distinctly marked by a noun class marker (CL) for singular and plural, respectively. In the sentence above, the *wa* of *watoto* and *wageni* is a plural class marker for "human" nouns. All referents to nouns, including verbs, must agree with the class of those nouns by taking corresponding agreement markers either with the S (Sagr) or the O (Oagr). As would be expected, there are many exceptions and complications. Nevertheless those exceptions or complications are themselves systematic.

The morphological breakdown of the Swahili sentence above would thus be as follows:

(4) wa-toto wa-angu wa-na-wa-jua wa-geni
CL-S.child S-my S-PRES-O-know CL-O:guest
"My children know [the] guests"

11.4 Data and translation

As mentioned earlier, the letter below is selected for analysis purposes because it captures a sufficiently large number of structural deviations from SS and code-switching from French into the host language. All references to individuals have altered names except for Linette Spink who was the recipient of the letter. French words are underlined. Swahili deviations are in bold. Italics are used for words that did not lend themselves to translation. The remaining letters reinforce the deviations marked in this letter. The letter selected is a good representation of the direction of urban Bujumbura Swahili, RA as referenced earlier.

1. Très Chère Linette.
   [my] very dear Linette.

Paragraph 1

2. Vipi? Abari ya siku **mingi**? Uka enda bila **ku avertir**, **uko** liobo. Na mimi **niko** liobo
   How are you? How have you been? You left without a word, you're bad. I'm bad too
3. kweli, kuona **sikuandikiye**. Alakini problème **niko nayo** ni ya luga, **sijuwe** Kingereza.
   really seeing that I haven't written to you. The problem I'm saddled with is one of language. I don't know English.
4. (My English is liobo). Sisi wote (My Familly is very good). Problème **tuko nayo ivi**, ni
   My English is bad. All of us are well. The problem we're saddled with is this, it's
5. ya **inchi** (Pays) insècurite total, hata **ivi atuya anza** Entrainement; **Ba** Jean-Pierre,
   the country, complete insecurity, to the point that we're not starting our training. J-P,
6. Alain na **bangine aba wezi** ku fika Nyakabiga, ala kini tunaonana. Sasa wewe
   Alain and the others are not able to come to Nyakabiga but we do see each other. Now you
7. **Unatumika**? Au una soma?
   Are you employed? Or are you studying?

Paragraph 2

8. Est-ce-que **utarudiaka uku**? Kama **autarudia nta uzika** sana, *Ju* **weye uko** Very good
   Will you be back here? If you don't return I'll be very upset. [*Ju]* You're very good
9. kila **mutu** alikupenda. **Batu mingi bana ku ni uliza** kila siku. Paul ni mzima?
   everyone liked you. Many people ask me about you every day. How is Paul?
10. **umu salimiye** sana, **umwambiye kama** [<kwamba] **tuna mukumbuka** sana.
    give him my best wishes, tell him that we remember him fondly.
11. You family **uba salimiye bote** (jambo).
    [And] Your family, greet them all [say] hello.

Paragraph 3

12. Linette nakuomba sana usi ache ku fanya Karaté, unaipenda basi endelea,
    Linette, I beg you don't stop doing your Karate. You love it. Just pursue

13. **Njo** [<njozi] vizuri **usi rabishe** volonté yako.
    [your] wonderful dream don't give up.

Paragraph 4

14. Jaquelline, Françoise, Joëlle, Patrick na **bangine bote**, **aseme yambo** sana.
    J, F, C, P and all the others say hello.

Paragraph 5

15. basi **na maliziya** hapa kwa leo, *Ju* niki andika **bingi sazingine auta sikiya**
    I'll stop here for today [*Ju*] if I write any more you won't understand
16. Kiswahili changu, alakini na ku **itikiya** kama **nta kuwa na kwandi kiya** sana.
    My Swahili. I will write more when I hear from you.
17. Mes salutations à tous qui te sont chères.
    Greetings to all who are dear to you.
18. A bientôt
    Until later

11.5 Analysis of striking RA features

In the sample letter there are several features of RA that stand out because they are not shared with SS. These are elaborated here.

11.5.1 French loans

With only one exception the French words are not naturalized into the Swahili system. Their presence remains in perfect French even when incorporated into a Swahili inflection for the infinitive. **Ku avertir** "to inform" as opposed to, for example, **usiforgeti** (**usisahau** in SS) "don't forget." The exception occurs on line 13 of Paragraph 3, **usi rabishe**. The French word rabach-er (to trivialize) is fully incorporated into a Swahili context: **u - si** – rabish – **e**. The last sentence of Paragraph 3, **basi endelea njo vizuri usirabishe** volonté **yako**, could read as "Just pursue your wonderful dream don't undermine your determination." **Usirabishe** involves other processes of suffixation and vowel harmony that are not pertinent here. It is of interest, however, that in this instance the author of our letter has a perfectly correct but complex SS construction.

11.5.2 h-dropping

The words **abari**, **ivi**, **aba wezi**, **atuya anza**, **uku**, and **autarudia** exhibit h-dropping. In SS they would be **habari**, **hivi**, **hawawezi**, **hatu(ya)anza**,

huku, **hutarudi**. Notice also that in three cases, the [h] occurs: hata, hivi, and hapa. There are two categories of "words" here.

A	**abari~**habari	"news"
	ivi~hivi	"like so"
	uku~huku	"here"
B	**abawezi~**hawawezi	"they cannot/they are not able"
	atuyaanza~hatu(ya)anza	"we are not starting"
	autarudi~hutarudi	"you are not returning"

The words in A merely exhibit a phonetic phenomenon where an initial [h] is dropped. This is a widespread phenomenon in northeastern Tanzania and in many Bantu languages including Kirundi where the corresponding [h] in other Bantu languages is missing. Those in B, however, represent a more serious deviation. These words are all verbs and are used in the negative. The negative marker in SS is a verb initial [ha] and the [a] is deleted before vowels. The initial /a-/ in RA represents the negative morpheme. The initial /h-/ represents the negative morpheme in SS, hence RA: **a+utarudi** and SS: h+utarudi. But despite the difference in the morphemes, the reduction of the negative morpheme /ha-/ to [a] in RA may well be considered an expansion of the phonetic phenomenon in category A.

11.5.3 Human plural class marker

In RA, the human plural class marker is /ba-/ instead of the SS /wa-/: **Bangine aba wezi**, **Batu**, **ubasalimiye bote** (< **ba+ote**). In SS these would be **Wengine (<wa+ingine)**, **hawawezi**, **Watu**, **(u)wasalimie wote**. Notice also **wote** in **Sisi wote** (< **wa+ote**) on line 4 of Paragraph 1. Again, this suggests an inconsistent shift between RA of Bujumbura and SS. The use of [ba] is clearly a reflection of Kirundi interference since it is the human plural class marker in that language.

An interesting deviation from SS is the use of **ba** in lines 5 and 6 of Paragraph 1: **Ba Jean-Pierre, Alain na bangine bote.** Proper nouns in SS do not take noun class markers. The author of the letter very likely used the **Ba** to justify the agreement prefix with **bangine (ba+ingine)**, **wengine (<wa+ingine)** in SS. But since this usage is not repeated in Paragraph 4, the possibility becomes less likely. It is possible that the author of the letter may be using the colloquial French [ba], used when a speaker wishes to utter a sense of frustration or denying as in *ba non, je t'ai déjà dit non* "no for crying out loud, I've already told you no." What lends this second interpretation some credence is the fact that the RA phrase occurs in an emotive portion of the letter. In any event the first interpretation is more innovative and less conservative in its deviation.

11.5.4 /mu-/

Notice the class marker /mu-/ in **mutu** on line 9 of Paragraph 2 and the third person object agreement marker /-mu-/ in **Umusalimiye**, **tuna mukumbuka** on line 10 of the same paragraph. In SS these would be **mtu**, (**U**)**msalimie** and **tunamkumbuka** since SS deletes the [u] before consonants and changes it to [w] before vowels. SS may be unique in this matter. The author is therefore entirely within the phonological context of his native language, Kirundi, and his broader geographic area.

11.5.5 /n-/

The first person subject agreement marker in RA is /n-/ as in **nta uzika** in line 8. The SS equivalent would be /ni**-**/, yielding **nitauzika**. In faster speech, however, SS could also drop the [i]. Notice, however, **niki andika** in line 15 of Paragraph 5. Here the full segment, [**ni**], is maintained. This, and other inconsistencies such as the [mu]~[m] dichotomy, as well as the [ba-]~[wa] alternation and other contrasts such as the occasional occurrence of SS forms will be addressed again below in a brief section of conclusions.

11.5.6 Agreement markers

RA exhibits an inconsistent deviation from SS in the assignment of agreement markers.

RA	SS	
siku mingi	**siku nyingi**	many days
batu mingi	**watu wengi** (< **wa**+**ingi**)	many people
sazingine	**saa nyingine** (< **ni**+**ingine**)	another hour

Complicating the situation is the fact that colloquial Tanzanian Swahili does use **zingine** to mean "some" or "other(s)." The author of the letter could thus have meant "several hours" or "another hour" in writing **sazingine**.

11.5.7 Object agreement marking

Notice the phrase in line 9 of Paragraph 2, **Batu mingi bana ku ni uliza** "Many people ask me about you." The order of prefixes preceding the verb in SS is as follows in the context of the letter in question:

> Subject agreement + Tense + Object agreement (human/animate only) + V + . . .

The ellipsis refers to possible suffixes not relevant to our purposes here. The point is that there is only one slot for each of S-AGR, Tense and

O-AGR markers, respectively. In other words, the verb does not take two O-AGR markers. But the author of this letter has squeezed in two object agreement markers, a second person singular marker, /-ku-/, and a first person singular marker /-ni-/: **banakuniuliza** literally translates as "they you me ask." The "you" /-ku-/ should not be there if the arguments of the verb intended by the author of the letter are to be maintained. In other words, the intended logical relationships are **they** ask **me** [about you]. There is one more refinement required here but it is not relevant to our purposes. SS would rewrite this phrase as **wananiuliza** "they ask me" or more completely in terms of the author's intentions as **wanauliza habari yako "**they ask about you" or **wananiuliz(i)**a **habari yako** "they ask me about you." The structure of the proposed **SS** rewrites would be as follows:

wa	**+**	**na**	**+**	**uliza**
SAGR		PRES		V

Wa	**+**	**na**	**+**	**ni**	**+**	**uliza**
SAGR		PRES		OAGR		V

The above discussion on the number of object agreement markers raises broader issues with reference to agglutinative languages subject to RA as in the case of the register of this letter's author. When there are prescribed segments for various grammatical functions as prefixes or suffixes, there is inevitably a tendency in RA to insert additional morphemes as the intended message requires. In other words there is a tendency for fewer words and more prefixes or suffixes: **banakuniuliza** instead of **bana(ni)uliza abari yako**. Clearly this is a hypothesis that needs further testing.

11.5.8 The verb "to be"

RA exhibits a consistent use of /-ko/ for the verb "be" in Paragraphs 1 and 2.

uko liobo, **niko liobo**, **uko very good**, **niko nayo, tuko nayo**

SS does not have a copula "be" in the present tense, but for emphasis uses /ni/. There are still other alternatives but they are not relevant to our purposes here. The /-ko/ found in RA for this purpose is used in SS for the locative "be," as in "you are at home" **uko nyumbani.** We do, however, find phrases such as **iko baridi** "it is cold." The reader will notice that the translations given to the last two items (**niko nayo** and **tuko nayo** on lines 3 and 4 of Paragraph 1 are "I'm saddled with" and "we're saddled with," respectively. The idiomatic nature of the translation is meant to capture the writer's locutionary force and discourse style

which renders the use of /-ko/ something other than a simple copula. This observation very likely applies to all five occurrences of the verb.

11.5.9 Orthography

There are several orthographic deviations scattered throughout the letter. All of them conform to phonetic reality and ignore spelling convention. These are significant because they indicate Swahili illiteracy and lack of any instruction in the language.

RA	SS
sikuandikiye	**sikuandikie**
sijuwe	**sijui**
na maliziya	**namalizia**
autasikiya	**autasikia**
itikiya	**itikia**
kwandikiya	**kuandikia**

There are several other errors that would be considered simply typing mistakes if the letter were typed. They project no other significance. They include the second "word" above, **sijuwe** instead of **sijui**. Another is found in the phrase **bangine bote __aseme** instead of **bangine bote basema.** The occurrence of **jambo** once and **yambo** a second time is a vacillation between SS and RA in that order. The latter is more common among non-RA speakers.

11.6 Conclusions

Speakers of SS have for many centuries been accommodating Arabic loans that may have started as code-switched items. They have been repeating this process with English, German, French, Gujurati, Urdu, and other languages, particularly the Bantu languages spoken on the Kenyan coast that are collectively known as Miji Kenda such as Digo, Duruma, and Giryama. It is not possible to have such excessive contact and resultant loans of lexical items without at least the morphology of the language being affected.

More than any other language, SS has been adopted by a vast majority of non-native speakers whose native languages are, like SS, Bantu. Kirundi in Burundi is a prime example as evidenced in the case of the author of the letter analyzed above. There are many others, Gikuyu in Kenya, Kihaya, Kichaga, Kisukuma, Kinyamwezi, and Kizaramo in Tanzania, Luganda in Uganda. And then there are those whose native languages are not members of the Bantu family of languages. Dholuo speakers around the eastern shores of Lake Nyanza/Victoria are loath to admit any fluency in Swahili. The non-native SS speakers number in

the tens of millions while SS speakers who are ethnic Swahili number only about one to two hundred thousand people.

Literacy rates among speakers of Bantu languages are higher in the languages of colonial legacy (French and English for purposes of this chapter) than they are in the respective Bantu languages mentioned above as examples. Instruction in Swahili is very inconsistent. It is highest and most sustained on the coast of Kenya and throughout Tanzania. Away from the coast of Kenya it begins to have sporadic presence. It is almost completely absent elsewhere in the broader geographic area where Swahili has presence.

Absent Swahili instruction and literacy most Swahili speakers use a form of Swahili typologically akin to that of the author of our letter and for the very same reasons. These circumstances are especially enhanced in urban centers where there is maximum multilingual contact. Bujumbura is such a center. On the one hand such urban centers promote the use of Swahili and on the other, they accelerate the display of the type of RA we encounter in our author's letter. Given the numbers, given the lack of Swahili instruction, and given the vibrancy of urban life in the radius of the Swahili speaking world, one would not be entirely wrong to suspect that urban varieties of RA are the future of Swahili, despite the fact that it will take a very long time for them to become the new standard even if other factors do not interfere.

Notes

1 Linette Spink was a doctoral candidate in Linguistics at the University of Florida working under my supervision. A more comprehensive version of this chapter was to be her dissertation, entitled "Innovations in Swahili on the Fringes of the Swahili Speaking World." Tragically, she died in a car accident on her way back from a karate meet in St. Augustine, Florida, prior to completion of her final copy. She was awarded her doctoral degree posthumously in May of 1999. The following presentation constitutes Linette Spink's and my mutual understanding and input for the analysis of her data.

12 Polarizing and blending: compatible practices in a bilingual urban community in Cape Town

Kay McCormick

12.1 Introduction

The area that is now the city of Cape Town has, for thousands of years, been a place of encounters among speakers of different languages. It has been a settlement for little over three hundred and fifty years. Of the many languages which have been spoken in the area, few have left linguistic traces and even fewer have survived—though somewhat changed—as fully functional languages. Two of these surviving languages are the sources of structures and vocabulary for the local bilingual vernacular[1] that is the subject of this chapter.

Central to this vernacular and its use is a paradox. In the communities that use it, the two contributing languages, English and Afrikaans, are polarized symbolically while also being linguistically blended in an established vernacular. The two languages carry salient and strongly contrasting social, political, and economic associations which people readily articulate. However, speaker awareness of these associations is not constant. Switching from one language to the other in informal conversation often bears no discernable link to them, seeming merely to create stylistic effects or to signal subtle shifts in footing between speakers.

This vernacular is widely used in some of Cape Town's colored[2] working-class communities. Some of the relations of power that shaped these communities and their language are common to the dynamics of other African cities, while others are peculiar to this city with its particular experience of slavery, colonialism, migration, the systematic social engineering of the apartheid era, and the recent establishment of a democratic political dispensation within which poverty and marginalization still exist.

In the next section I sketch the historical context in which the vernacular developed. I then describe broad linguistic features of the vernacular

and give an account of how it has been used in an inner-city neighborhood. Attention is drawn to the effects of political change on speakers' attitudes toward the vernacular and the standard dialects of the two languages. I also point to some of the theoretical and methodological challenges which the vernacular raises for sociolinguists.

12.2 A history of language contact in the Cape Town area[3]

Because shifts in political and economic control affected the social composition of the city and set the parameters for relationships between different ethnic and language groups, I have periodized my account of language contact in the city on the basis of shifts in control. I have also kept the continuities between periods in view.

As is usually the case in contact situations characterized by inequalities of power, in Cape Town it was the languages of the politically and economically dominant groups which survived and spread. Those of the least powerful people—some indigenous groups and slaves—did not survive in the city.

Archaeological records show that, prior to the arrival of the Dutch in the mid-seventeenth century, the territory that is now Cape Town had not been settled but had been used by coastal foragers for millennia and, for about 1300 years, also by nomadic pastoralists.[4]

Encounters between these indigenous people and Europeans began in the fifteenth century when seafarers put to shore in the bay, in need of fresh water and food. In order to ensure the regular availability of food for the crews of its ships plying between the Netherlands and its bases in Asia, the Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC) established a small settlement in the mid-seventeenth century.[5] As it expanded, this settlement disrupted the socioeconomic organization of the indigenous people. By demanding exclusive use of land which had previously been available to hunter-gatherers and herders, Dutch farmers removed their sources of livelihood. Resistance was short-lived and brutally overcome. Many of the San people, who were blamed for stock losses, were hunted down and shot. Survivors migrated to distant places. Several clans of Khoikhoi remained in the area but their social and economic organization was further—and irretrievably—damaged by a smallpox epidemic in 1713 which decimated them, and by drought and cattle disease which led to the loss of most of their stock. Survivors became dependent on the settlement for their livelihood and thus had to engage more intensively with it.

Early records note that some Khoikhoi learned Dutch in order to communicate with the settlers. In 1689, Dr. Browne wrote of them, "The

language they speak is so hard that the Dutch cannot learn it, but they speak Dutch prettie well" (quoted in Raven-Hart 1971: 388). The Dutch and Khoikhoi languages were not the only ones spoken in the early Cape settlement. VOC officials had arrived from Batavia with slaves, and once commercial farming and related services got underway, the number of imported slaves increased enormously. The following list of slaves' places of origin gives some idea of the linguistic heterogeneity of this part of the population.[6]

The first shipments of slaves in 1658 were from Dahomey and Angola. Subsequent shipments of African slaves came from east Africa: Madagascar and Mozambique in particular, but also Zanzibar. Portuguese Creole was spoken in those regions, but it is not clear whether it was commonly known among slaves. Malagasy, an Austronesian language, was spoken by slaves from Madagascar. Some of them also knew Dutch. The year 1677 saw the arrival of the first Asian slaves. They were from southern India, and were followed by slaves from other parts of India (Malabar, Bengal, Coromandel), and Ceylon. Thousands of slaves were brought from the Indonesian Archipelago (particularly Java, Sumatra, Sulawesi in the Celebes, Macassar, Ternate, and Timor) and the Malayan Peninsula. The languages spoken by the Asian slaves included Malay, Bugis, Bengali, and Portuguese Creole.

Other coerced arrivals in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were convicts, political prisoners, and exiles from Indonesia. Several of them were literate and highly educated. They passed on the intellectual traditions of their places of origin, and kept Islamic scholarship and practices alive. This was a major factor in the sustained vitality of Islam, despite the VOC's disallowing of any religion apart from Calvinist Christianity.

According to Shell, the slaves at the Cape were "more heterogeneous than any other slave society" (1994: 50). They had to use whatever linguistic resources were to hand in order to communicate. Their own home languages had limited currency but there were other options. Malay, the home language of many slaves from the Malayan Peninsula, had been a lingua franca among Muslims in the Indonesian Archipelago and it continued to have this role in Cape Town. Portuguese Creole was a lingua franca for some Asian and East African slaves. Ponelis's account of a 1726 court case provides an interesting vignette: "Nineteen slaves were involved; three were Portuguese speaking, four Malay speaking and twelve spoke Dutch, but among themselves they spoke Portuguese" (1993: 16). Portuguese Creole could be used as a lingua franca for communication not only among slaves, but also between slaves and their owners. This was because, unlike Malay, it was known by those Dutch-speaking VOC officials who had lived in Batavia, and

also by some Cape born burghers. It was still in use in the early nineteenth century.

In addition to the two exoglossic lingua francas, a local one developed during the eighteenth century. Roberge (2001) postulates the development of a stable Cape Dutch pidgin within the Afro-Asian substratum by roughly 1710. (By that time imported slaves outnumbered slave-owners.) This pidgin would have drawn on the resources available in Dutch, Portuguese Creole, Malay, and Khoikhoi dialects and would have been used by successive waves of imported slaves. Roberge's hypothesis is that it would have remained in use until about 1840, when the last of the imported slaves would have died. This pidgin is an important part of the linguistic ancestry of the contemporary bilingual vernacular.

Conditions for the development of such a pidgin were ideal in urban households of the Dutch burghers. Unlike their farming counterparts, urban Dutch households rarely had numerous slaves. Typically, they owned between five and seven. Since slaves were expensive, householders rarely bought more than one from any particular shipment. This meant that there was little chance that the slaves of one household would be speakers of the same language. (There was more chance of that in the VOC's slave Lodge which housed up to 600 slaves at a time.) In most urban homes, slaves lived in the owner's house, not in separate slave quarters. In addition to slaves, Dutch homes often had one or more Khoikhoi domestic servants, many of whom lived on the property.[7] The nature of slaves' and servants' work in these urban homes facilitated fairly intensive contact among themselves and necessitated frequent contact with their Dutch-speaking owners/employers. These conditions were favorable to their acquisition of a second language (L2) variety of Dutch. This would be in keeping with the pattern of household-based slave societies identified by Mufwene (1996). In the homes of many Dutch burghers there would have been more speakers of L2 and pidginized Dutch than of first language (L1) Dutch.

Because of the living conditions, locally born slaves could seldom sustain their mother's language and usually a variety of Dutch became their L1. The children of the burghers had extensive and intensive exposure to the L2 and pidginized varieties of Dutch, often at a formative age as their wet-nurses and nannies were usually slaves. Under VOC rule not much attention was paid to the development of formal schooling,[8] so there was little conservative influence to counter the movement away from high-prestige norms of Netherlands-based L1 Dutch.[9] During the twentieth century there was heated debate among academics and in the wider public about the conditions under which Cape Dutch developed and "became" Afrikaans, and about whether or not Afrikaans is a Creole. Theories fell into two broad camps, one which

explained the development of Afrikaans as a natural process of historical change in an L1 dialect, and one which explained it as a process of creolization. Recently it has become accepted that these two explanations are not mutually exclusive, and that Afrikaans developed through a combination of L1 dialect change and processes of creolization.

By the end of VOC rule, most of the languages of indigenous people, slaves and immigrants were disappearing from the homes and streets of Cape Town, leaving Dutch-based varieties dominant as home language and, increasingly, as lingua franca.

The years 1795–1814 constituted a period of transition from Dutch to British control,[10] and from Dutch to English as the dominant language. In the early nineteenth century economic opportunities available in the thriving port city attracted new settlers. Among these were British citizens of all social classes. English became a lingua franca in the Central Business District. According to Davenport (1982: 278), initially resistance to British rule by the Dutch middle class was not strong, partly because they believed that under the VOC their interests had not been properly recognized, and partly because cultural ties with the Netherlands were not strong.

In the year 1808, the slave trade was abolished within the British Empire. The effect was to curtail the importation of slaves, but not to impede buying and selling of slaves who were already here. The net result was the depletion of the Cape Town slave community through sales of slaves to farmers further north in the territory. By 1815, they no longer constituted the majority of the town's population and in 1833 slavery was abolished.

There was freedom of religion under British rule. Christian missionaries who worked with slaves and free blacks were particularly welcomed by the new government which hoped they would counter the increasing influence of Islam in that sector of the population. They were not very successful in this regard. The Muslim community grew rapidly. Islam appealed particularly to people who had been oppressed or marginalized by the Calvinist Dutch during the previous 150 years. Many slaves of both African and Asian origin converted to Islam. In the early years of Muslim education students needed to know Malay as well as classical Arabic, because the former was used for oral instruction about Islamic history and practices. By 1815 Cape Dutch was being used for this purpose in some madrassas. It was probably introduced to cater for the large number of converts to Islam for whom Malay was unfamiliar, but who did know Cape Dutch. This group would have included slaves of African origin. Like Malay, the Cape Dutch/Afrikaans[11] used by Muslims was written in Arabic script. It rapidly became the dominant language for interactions among Muslims and also in what Bank refers to as the

"creolised (. . .) slave/underclass culture" that was developing in the early nineteenth century (Bank 1994: 90).

In the year 1822, an anglicization campaign was established to promote English at the expense of Dutch in the domains of law, education, and (Christian) religious institutions. Teachers were recruited from Britain and instructed to teach "the children of the Dutch colonists chiefly" and "heathens if required . . . the English language, writing, arithmetic, the first principles of sacred music and the principles of the Christian religion" (Behr 1988: 89). English was the obligatory medium of instruction in all state-funded schools until 1892, and it had to be taught as a subject in all schools. The anglicization campaign alienated many members of the white Dutch-speaking community at the Cape. (It had been aimed chiefly at them as the previously dominant group, rather than at the underclass.) This alienation was a contributing factor to the northward migration of groups from this community in and after the 1830s. They consolidated their independence from colonial rule by establishing republics a thousand or more kilometers to the north of Cape Town. It was in those territories that major deposits of diamonds and gold were discovered in the 1860s and 1880s. Conflict over that mineral wealth and other issues led to war between the British and the republicans between 1899 and 1902. As the extended conflict between the two groups had a ripple effect on the development of the vernacular, I return to it later.

Neither British rule in general, nor the abolition of slavery lead to equality among the inhabitants of the Cape. The slavery-based socioeconomic order was replaced by other kinds of stratification, notably on the grounds of race or color. Mason argues that during the early postemancipation period "in practice, speech, and indirectly in law, the colonists were inventing a "racially" defined, subordinate working class" (1992: 589). Official colonial records after 1840 divided the population into three categories: "Coloured," "White," and "Native." Other historical records indicate that discrimination on grounds of color existed in the general population, not only between white and colored, but also between colored and black—here the term "black" refers to Africans. Reduced contact between different groups of English and Afrikaans speakers, combined with heightened awareness of race and class, facilitated dialect differentiation.

In the second half of the century Cape Town grew very rapidly, largely as a result of the discovery of diamonds in Kimberley in 1867 and gold in the Witwatersrand in 1886. Its harbor, financial and commercial institutions and its manufacturing sector served the new mining areas. English was the language most used in the growing national and international connections. Economic opportunities at all levels

attracted thousands of people to Cape Town from as far afield as Europe, Australia, and the West Indies, and also from neighboring countries and other parts of South Africa. New arrivals who were not English-speaking learned the language, often informally at work but also through formal language classes for adults. Their children were able to learn it at school. Some families underwent language shift to English over three generations, for example from Yiddish. Others became bilingual, with English being the language of work and school and Xhosa or Afrikaans remaining the home language. Many working-class immigrants and migrants settled in inner-city neighborhoods, such as District Six, where the bilingual vernacular was developing.

During British colonial rule education was strongly promoted in schools run by the state and by religious institutions. Many schools admitted children of all races. However, fuelled by social Darwinism, racism increased in and beyond the city and, in 1905 a law segregating Cape schools was promulgated. Class divisions were responsible for another level of separation. But, for some decades, within each class and each race group, children with different home languages could attend the same school. In the city most schools were English medium.

English was sought after as a language of wider horizons in spite of the racism of many of its speakers and other negative associations. For instance, according to Davids, among the city's Muslims it was regarded as "the language of the infidel", and "an indulgence in it" was seen as a strong sign of faithlessness in God (Davids 1990: 20). At the same time as English was strengthening its base in the city, there were movements both in the western Cape and further afield to raise the status of Afrikaans.[12] White Afrikaans speakers were determined that it should be recognized as a language in its own right, not regarded as merely a low-status dialect of a European language, an unfit alternative to English in public life. Pressure groups campaigned for this. Their determination was strengthened by the deepening hostility between white English and Afrikaans speakers that I have already referred to, and by the anglicization policy instituted in the defeated republics after the war. Post-war negotiations resulted in some compromises. When the former republics were joined with the two former British colonies to form the Union of South Africa in 1910 Dutch was established as an official language alongside English throughout the Union. Four years later Afrikaans won recognition as a medium of instruction in schools, and in 1926 it became a national official language, effectively displacing Dutch.

In the context of this chapter, it is important to note that the basis of standard Afrikaans was "Oosgrensafrikaans," the dialect spoken by whites who had migrated to the north east of Cape Town. This dialect, and that of people who had migrated to the north west, developed in

relative isolation from the one that was taking form among the poorer, largely colored inhabitants of Cape Town. In the twentieth century the energetic and well-resourced promotion of standard Afrikaans was inseparable from the promotion of the interests of white Afrikaans speakers.

Since the interests of white Afrikaners were often in competition with the interests of colored Afrikaans speakers, it is not surprising that the previously mentioned divergence between the two groups' dialects of Afrikaans grew deeper during subsequent decades of increasing segregation. According to Ross (1979: 7)

> where physical segregation is practiced, and where group relations are manifestly or latently competitive, linguistic differences are maintained as mechanisms of boundary maintenance. (. . .) Even when the same language is spoken, different collectivities will evidence variations in vocabulary, intonation, and syntax—an ethnic division of labour, to use Hechter's term, will be complemented by an ethnic division of dialect.

Racial discrimination was formalized and extended during the first 90 years of the twentieth century. This was done not only by the Nationalist Government, notorious for its policy of apartheid, but also by its predecessors. Segregation affected the development of the bilingual working-class vernacular which had begun to emerge in the inner city during the nineteenth century. It did so in various ways. One of these was that it effectively removed the possibility that Xhosa and other African languages would contribute to it.

After 1948 the apartheid era ushered in a raft of legislation that saw the formalizing of mandatory race classification and—linked with it—segregation in all domains of life. It also saw widespread, sustained efforts to enforce the learning and use of standard Afrikaans. That form of the language, esteemed by white Afrikaners, was associated with oppression by the victims of apartheid and was disliked for that reason. Overall, those who gained most and suffered least under apartheid were white, and those who suffered most constituted the group called—at various times—"Native," "Bantu," "African," "black." People classified as "Coloured" lost their limited voting rights and their freedom to live, work, and take their leisure as and where they wished.[13] Among colored people who lived in Cape Town there was a particular sense of betrayal. They felt bitter that white people among whom they had lived, with whom they had worked, whose languages they spoke, now classed them as "other," and then forcibly removed them from places they had formerly shared. These feelings affected their attitudes toward, and use

of, the bilingual vernacular and the standard varieties of the two contributing languages.

In the year 1990, the liberation movements were unbanned as the first step in dismantling apartheid. Extended negotiations followed. They culminated in the acceptance, in 1996, of a new constitution which laid the basis for the development of a more equitable society. The legacy of apartheid is, however, still very evident. It shows, among other places, in alliances and oppositions that have been forming and shifting ever since 1990. One such alliance developed among those white and colored speakers of Afrikaans who feared black majority rule.[14] In an effort to build a substantial political base, they focused attention on what they had in common. The most conspicuous factor was language, but for it to work as a binding force there had to be a change in the way dialect differences were regarded. Various strategies were used to foster a perception of the dialects as complementary, and to accord more recognition of the contribution to Afrikaans made by the slave and indigenous ancestors of colored people. There is now a wider acceptance of standard Afrikaans, and conversely, standard Afrikaans speakers' attitudes toward other dialects of the language are less critical.

12.3 Form, associations, and functions of the vernacular

To give a sense of what the bilingual vernacular is like and how it is used, I draw on what I know of one community in which it is the solidarity code.

In the 1980s I undertook a sociolinguistic research on language use in a small inner-city working-class community.[15] It was a remnant of District Six. Dating back to the 1830s, this was one of the areas in which freed slaves had settled. It had also been home to working-class immigrants and refugees from Europe and to migrants from elsewhere in Africa. While many other parts of the expanding city became more homogenous through the processes of stratification which I referred to earlier, District Six remained cosmopolitan throughout the nineteenth century. Its inhabitants have thus had a long, unbroken history of language contact and of adapting their linguistic repertoire to meet new social and economic needs. In 1966, District Six was declared a white area although most of its inhabitants had been classified colored. Over the next 15 years approximately 60,000 inhabitants were removed to outlying parts of the city, and nearly all of the buildings were razed to the ground. This was done to make way for white occupation of the area which is prime land. The participants in my case study had, after

years of uncertainty, been able to remain in the Chapel Street neighborhood which was cut off from the rest of District Six by a freeway. Nonetheless they were deeply affected by the razing of the rest of District Six, by other discriminatory laws, and by the mental set that underpinned apartheid.

My starting point for the case study was an interest in how pre-school children in bilingual neighborhoods like these learned to use the two languages in ways that met local norms. Obviously, in order to pursue this interest, I needed an understanding of how the two languages and various combinations thereof were regarded—and used—by other members of the community. This was gained through interviews and observation. In the years 1999 and 2000, I did a brief follow-up study. Its main purpose was to see whether the political and related changes of the early 1990s had had the sociolinguistic effects I expected.

For its functions, meanings, and structures to be understood, the vernacular must be seen in relation to the standard dialects of English and Afrikaans. Schematically, the local linguistic repertoire could be represented as a spectrum with the standard dialects at either end, the non-standard dialects closer together because there is some convergence between them, and in the center the characteristic switching between the two languages. The switching is usually between the two non-standard dialects.

In Figure 12.1 I give the local names for elements of the repertoire in italics. Where local dialects have low overt prestige the names given to them by outsiders and even by insiders are often pejorative. This is the case with "kombuistaal" and "broken English" but not with "Kaaps." As Figure 12.1 indicates, my categorization of elements of the repertoire does not exactly match that of community members. I return later to the problem of categorizing the elements of this repertoire.

My description of the repertoire takes as a point of departure the notion that English and Afrikaans can be seen as separate languages,

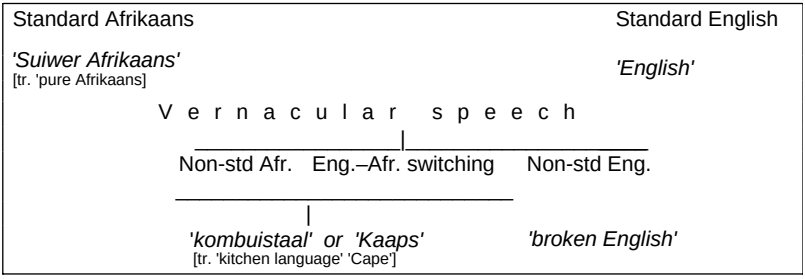

Figure 12.1 The linguistic repertoire of the Chapel Street neighborhood

that each has a distinctive non-standard dialect, and that there are discernible differences between these local dialects. This notion has strengths and limitations. The strengths are that it is congruent with speakers' perceptions, that it facilitates drawing on the sociolinguistic history of the two languages in Cape Town, and that it allows me to generalize about clusters of linguistic features. The limitations become apparent when one tries to classify whole utterances or even words as English or Afrikaans, and when one tries to do fine-grained analysis of actual utterances (see the note on transcription below). Then it emerges that boundaries between them are not clear and firm but fuzzy and shifting. Writing about repertoires in which the vernacular and the standard variety coexist and are closely related, Wolfram (1986: 4) says,

> In such a situation, the inherent difficulties of the specialised field-work setting are compounded by the proximity of the linguistic systems and the fluctuation of linguistic variants within and across linguistic systems. Attempting to sort out the linguistic forms that are an inherent part of the vernacular and standard, respectively, thus becomes a major theoretical and methodological problem.

The situation in which I worked was further complicated by the fact that there was not one but two languages, each with a standard dialect and a non-standard dialect.

The local dialect of Afrikaans is very similar to the standard dialect in syntax and morphology. One of the few syntactic differences is that there is greater flexibility about verb position. This allows constructions that are similar to their English equivalents. The lexicon is very different—it draws heavily on English, mainly for nouns and verbs but also for some conjunctions. English verbs often take Afrikaans tense morphemes, but borrowed nouns usually retain their English plural morphemes.[16] Extract (1) is an example of this dialect. The speakers are two Muslim women. Translations of this and other extracts are enclosed in square brackets and follow the original utterances. Where I think it will help the reader I do not simply give isolated translations of Afrikaans words, but render the whole utterance in English. Punctuation has been used to enhance readability. The fact that I do not put the English loanwords in the font used for Afrikaans should not be taken to suggest that they are not yet established as part of this dialect of Afrikaans. Nor should it be taken to suggest that I assume that speakers would register the English origins—there is no way of knowing whether or not they would.

(1)
O *Dan sê ek ek is so* proud *vir my* colour. *Ek wil nie* even *sê my* colour *moet* fade *nie maar weet jy hoekom?* (. . .) *Want Allah het my* colour *gechoose*

M Mm
O *Ek is so* proud *van my* colour, ALGAMDOELILA. "s the truth, *nê*?
M Of course
[then I say I am so proud of my colour. I don't even want to say that my colour should/must fade, but do you know why? Because Allah chose my colour.]

After the Arabic "Algamdoelila," O produces a whole statement in English, and follows it with a tag question which was originally Afrikaans but is now widely used in English conversations as well (Woolard 1999 describes such terms as "bivalent"). Note the Afrikaans past-tense morpheme "*ge*" on the verb "choose."

The similarity in morphology and syntax between this dialect and standard Afrikaans can probably be attributed to the fact that many of the structures that characterize Afrikaans (and distinguish it from Dutch) were established while superstrate and substrate speakers were living in conditions of physical proximity and daily linguistic interaction before the abolition of slavery. Subsequent divergence would have been facilitated by the changed residential patterns that developed post slavery, and by the growth of the race and class-based segregation which I mentioned earlier. I believe that part of the value of this dialect for its speakers was that, in its prolific borrowing from English, it is transgressive, running counter to concern with linguistic "purity."

The local dialect of English is often somewhat self-consciously referred to by its speakers as "broken English." Unlike Kaaps it does not seem to have covert prestige. It overlaps extensively with standard English particularly in its lexicon but it differs in having several optional morphosyntactic rules. Some of these are similar to Afrikaans rules, for example for subject-verb concord and for word order. It is not as stable as its Afrikaans counterpart. In many colored working-class communities in Cape Town the local variety of English is transitional. Afrikaans-dominant parents are raising their children in English. The parents' L2 English is in the process of becoming an L1, but it is subject to the standardizing influence of the schools.

Another component of the community's repertoire is alternational switching between English and Afrikaans, usually between the nonstandard dialects. I use the term "switching" to refer to the alternation not of single words, but of phrases or longer chunks in one code or language with chunks in another. This component of the vernacular is less common than the use of the mixed code. Text (2) illustrates alternational switching. It comes from the same conversation as example (1). O is talking about the neighborhood:

(2)
O I'm friends with each and everybody, you know, even the drunkards

M Mm
O "Hello" "Morning" "*Middag" en so en so gaan dit aan met my, ja.* Because they also human—*Allah het ook vir hulle gemaak.* ["Afternoon" and so and so it goes with me, yes] [Allah also made them]

In this community—and in others that are comparable—few people have a good command of the standard dialects. The study of standard Afrikaans is compulsory in all grades at school. For some members of the community it was also the medium of instruction. It is very seldom used in contexts other than the school. In the 1980s speaking standard Afrikaans marked the speaker as at best, rural,[17] and at worst, as an apartheid supporter. During the apartheid era standard Afrikaans was regarded primarily as a reference point against which people defined their own dialect in a kind of "we/they" distinction. It was strongly associated with the suffering and loss of dignity caused by apartheid, whereas the local dialect was a solidarity code, binding those who had been categorized as second-class citizens and oppressed. Its covert prestige was high although its speakers and outsiders often criticized it as being inferior. As I said earlier, the animosity between the two sets of Afrikaans speakers dissipated somewhat with the advent of political change. By 1999, when I did my follow-up study, none of the interviewees said anything hostile about standard Afrikaans. Furthermore, as I had expected, their estimation of their own dialect had risen and it had more overt prestige. Several people indicated that they used it confidently outside their speech community, and that doing so posed no problems for their interlocutors. It was clear that they regarded it proudly as a marker of their identity.

Like its Afrikaans counterpart, standard English is a compulsory subject of study and a medium of instruction. It is the language for formal community occasions. English is associated with education and (aspirations of) upward mobility. Speaking English to outsiders is fine but, among adults, speaking it in the neighborhood is most decidedly not acceptable. It is taken as an indication that the speaker is a snob who doesn't wish to be seen as belonging to the community. In spite of this, many parents try to use only English with their children, believing that it will give them a better start in life. In 1999 I ascertained that this parental practice has not lead to children being unable or unwilling to use the bilingual vernacular. It is still used in peer group interactions among children, which means that it will probably remain the solidarity code for a long while yet.

Although the symbolic or social meanings of the two languages are very strong, and people are able to articulate them, it should not be assumed that they are always carried over into bilingual conversations.

My data includes some examples of switches that could be seen to index these meanings, but most do not do this. Some seem to perform only interpersonal, discourse or stylistic functions. In this the District Six data is not unusual (see Li 1998). Others are more difficult to account for. In the rest of this section I present and comment on a range of examples of vernacular mixing and switching. I do not wish to suggest that any of these switches are made on the basis of deliberate or conscious choice, not even in those where there may be some indexing of social meaning.

In extract (3) there is some congruence between the images associated with the two languages and the functions they perform in the interaction, which took place during the local Rugby Club's Annual General Meeting. It is part of a vigorous discussion of amendments to the Club's rules. The rule under discussion concerns penalties that should be incurred by team members who smoke dagga (marijuana) before a match. The norm or "unmarked"[18] code for meetings in this community is English.

(3)
H I propose two rand
Y Two weeks
J Two matches
H Suspension minimum two matches
J Minimum two matches
H But the committee can extend it if they want to impose still more
Y Extend it: *vir 'n/*a season suspend
[suspend for a season]
H But, assuming *die man rook dagga vir die eerste keer,* right? To suspend *hom vir twee weke—die* next week *toe doen hy { ? } toe doen hy dit weer. Nou, omdat jy sê* minimum two weeks*, en nou,* what I mean to say: the minimum is two weeks, but, um, *nou kan daai* committee decide *om jou meerder te straf.* [but assuming the man smokes dagga for the first time, right? To suspend him for two weeks, the next week he does it {?} he does it again. Now, because you say "minimum two weeks," and now, what I mean to say: the minimum is two weeks, but, um, now that committee can decide to punish you more]

The first six turns are unmarked. In the sixth H suggests that the committee should have discretion about the penalty. Y does not take up this suggestion. Instead he wants a stiffer penalty than those already considered. Both Y and H move away from formal English in their argument in the last two turns. That might seem to be a marked choice but on the other hand, these committee members are also friends and neighbors, and the community norm for expression of strong feelings and arguments

among friends is the vernacular. Thus I think that this shift from English to vernacular probably indexes a momentary shift in footing from interacting as committee members to interacting as they normally do as friends.

The penultimate turn in Extract (3) provides an example of one of the challenges the analyst faces in trying to decide where a switch from one language to another starts and ends. The boundary is fuzzy. *"vir"* is clearly Afrikaans. The next word, the indefinite article, could be either English or Afrikaans: it sounds the same in both languages although it is spelled differently. (It is pronounced as a schwa.) The last two words look English, but the word order is not English. Moreover, like many other terms relating to sport, these are established loanwords which seem to have replaced their Afrikaans equivalents. I have not ever heard their Afrikaans equivalents "*seisoen"* and *"skors"* in stretches of vernacular speech.

Extract (4) comes from a discussion in an interview. The switch to English could possibly be seen as indexing differences in political stance between those against Empire and those who supported it. Earlier in the conversation the speaker had made his anti-British position explicit.

(4) *Daarom sê ons dat* we don't fight for king and country.
[therefore we say that]

Interestingly, he does not sustain the "we code" throughout the two "we" phrases. He could have said "*Daarom sê ons dat ons baklei nie* for king and country *nie*." Instead, the switch comes at the beginning of the quoted speech. This is not surprising. Quotation is often signaled by a language switch. Language switching commonly marks the boundaries of a part of an utterance which is at a tangent to the main line of talk—for example, a checking question inserted into a set of instructions, as in (5), or a parenthetical phrase (the second switch in [7]):

(5) *Dis op Waalstraat*—you know Wale Street?—*oor Buitengrachtstraat.*
[it's on Wale Street] [above Buitengracht Street]

Emphasis achieved through repetition may be heightened by the use of both languages:

(6) *Daar het ons alles Engels gedoen.* We did everything in English.
[there we did everything (in) English]

The two parts in contrastive, conditional and causal constructions are often in different languages, as in (7)–(9), respectively:

(7) *Daar is som woorde wat mooi* explain *iets* but then you get some other words – *jissis man* – is phoney words.
[there are some words which explain things nicely] [exclamation]

(8) If we going to lose on it *dan is ons baie laag geval hierin*
[then we will fall very low in this]

(9) *Ons het nie* even *te* worry *oor die deur* because the two securities is there
[we don't even have to worry about the door]

In text (9) we have a clear example of convergence in the two dialects between which the speaker switches. The *Kaaps* component contains (established) English loanwords and, like English, it has only one negative. Standard Afrikaans negation is expressed by the use of two negatives. The English component has the singular form of the verb after a plural subject. Afrikaans uses the same verb form for singular and plural subjects. In the case of the verb "to be" this form is *is* (pronounced differently, though spelt the same).

These examples show that while speakers may articulate a consciousness of English and Afrikaans as separate and distinct languages, they can also weave them seamlessly together in conversation. Structural and lexical convergence between the two local non-standard dialects facilitates this weaving but has not erased all sense of the languages as separate. That is evident from the discourse and stylistic effects in examples (5)–(9) which entail the juxtaposition of elements of the two languages. The last example is of a child talking quietly to herself:

(10) *Ek het nou 'n {?}. Ek het die* colour *nou*. Where is it? *Nou gaan ek 'n TV kry.*
A few moments later she says, again very quietly:
So nou gaan ek doen—I don't know what colour I want
[Now I have a {?}. I have got this colour now.] [Now I am going to get a TV] [So now I am going to do-]

One can only speculate about what might account for these switches.

12.4 Conclusion

Over the centuries during which this vernacular has come into being, the two main languages from which it is derived have always been stratified in terms of speakers. Each has been the home language of a politically and economically dominant group as well as being learned and used in marginalized communities. From the beginning of settlement in Cape Town, the underclass was very multilingual and communicated among themselves by drawing on all the linguistic resources that were to hand. It is their descendants in some of Cape Town's working class areas who have retained this openness to linguistic borrowing,

mixing, and switching. Their bilingual vernacular has served as a marker of group identity. It has distinguished its users from those speakers of English and Afrikaans who treated them as inferior—and who tended to disapprove of language mixing. However, since the post-1994 change in political order, social, cultural, and linguistic mixing have been on the increase. Borrowing, mixing, and switching as linguistic practices are becoming more generally acceptable. This is reflected in many radio and television soap operas, reality shows and game shows—even those put out by the state broadcaster which, for all of its previous history, was very purist about language. It will be interesting to see whether this greater permissiveness takes the edge off the "oppositional" character that Cape Town's bilingual vernacular has had.

It will also be interesting to see what impact migration has on the local vernacular in the long term. Most migrants to Cape Town are Xhosa-speaking. They come from rural areas in the Eastern Cape. Since they are usually very poor, they have to live with family members or other connections. For most of them, their new home is in Xhosa-speaking townships. Social mixing with members of other communities is hampered by—among other things—low proficiency in Afrikaans and English.[19] Speakers of other South African languages are to be found among the migrants who settle in various parts of the city. Some of them include Tsotsitaal (also known as Flaaitaal) and I'scamtho in their linguistic repertoires. These are hybrid vernaculars that developed in black urban areas in and around Johannesburg. They draw mainly on Sotho and Nguni languages and Afrikaans. Not only are they increasingly being used in Cape Town's black townships, but some of their elements are finding their way into the streetwise register of young people from various linguistic, ethnic, and class backgrounds in other parts of the city. Thus it is likely that they will have an impact on Cape Town's bilingual vernacular. At present it seems less likely that the languages spoken by large numbers of immigrants and refugees from other parts of Africa will have an effect on the vernacular or any other local languages. Xenophobia is inhibiting the social contact and cross-linguistic influence that could occur in more hospitable circumstances.

Notes

1 By "vernacular" I mean the local non-standard dialects of English and Afrikaans and the characteristic ways of switching between them.

2 Local terminology dealing with race and ethnicity has changed over the three and a half centuries in which it has been used. In my research it is necessary to distinguish groups of people who were accorded different

rights and privileges on the basis of (variants of) a racial classification system. The labels signified how people were officially classified, rather than what their ancestry actually was or how they would have identified themselves. The official term for indigenous Africans changed from "native" to "bantu" to " black." The term "European" was replaced by "white." Anyone not classified "white" or "black" was classified as "coloured" until one of the subdivisions of that category was removed and established as a fourth category called "Indian." Concepts of "coloured" identity are highly contested – see, for example, the papers in Erasmus (2001).

3 There are serious imbalances in the representativeness of the primary and secondary sources on the period covered by this history. For an account of these limitations, and for a more detailed history of language contact in Cape Town, see McCormick 2002 (200–1, and 7–36, respectively).

4 Hunter-gatherers were commonly known as "Bushmen" or more recently as "San," while herders and coastal foragers were usually referred to as "Hottentots" or, more recently "Khoikhoi" / "Khoi" / "Khoe." Recent archaeological and historical research suggests that these categories were not clear-cut; see Smith (1990).

5 The English translation is "Dutch East India Company." The period of control over the Cape Peninsula and surrounding territory lasted from 1652 to 1795. One tier of control of this company was in the hands of a council, located in Batavia. The Cape settlement fell under this Council, which was answerable to the governing body of the VOC located in the Netherlands.

6 For a more comprehensive account of their origins, see Bradlow (1978), and for an analysis of the changing patterns of slave sources used during the VOC era, see Shell (1994).

7 Government proclamations (1775 and 1787) made it obligatory for urban Khoikhoi to live on the property of Dutch settlers.

8 By the year 1779, there were only eight schools in the area under VOC jurisdiction, the total number of pupils being 696 (Elphick and Shell 1989: 186–7).

9 For more detail on the structural and lexical changes undergone by Cape Dutch, see Deumert 2004; Roberge 1995; Thomason and Kaufman 1988: 251–6.

10 There were three phases to this transition. The first period of British military occupation (1794–1803) was followed by 3 years of Dutch control (1803–1805) and by the second British military occupation which lasted from 1806 until the Cape was given to Britain at the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1814.

11 I use the term "Cape Dutch" for the period prior to 1800, "Cape Dutch/Afrikaans for the early and mid-nineteenth century, and "Afrikaans" for the late nineteenth century and thereafter.

12 For a fuller account of these movements, see Ponelis (1993) and McCormick (2006).

13 Lewis (1987: 245–86) gives an account of the effects of Apartheid legislation on colored people, and their response to it.

14 Voting figures show that the majority of the two groups voted for the same party to oppose the African National Congress. See McCormick (2002: 107–10) for more detail.
15 Because political circumstances made it impossible for me to do an ethnographic study, I used a range of other methods of data gathering, for details of which see McCormick (2002: 65–81).
16 As I have argued elsewhere the local dialect of Afrikaans could be regarded as a mixed code. It does not entirely meet the criteria used by Bakker and Mous (1994: 4–7) for the definition of a mixed language, nor those proposed by Auer (1999) for a fused lect. See McCormick 1989 and 2002: 92–93, and Deumert 2005 for more extensive discussion on the categorization challenges posed by the District Six linguistic repertoire.
17 In rural areas in the Western and Northern Cape the home language of most colored people is Afrikaans, a dialect that is very much closer to the standard dialect.
18 Myers Scotton (1993b) uses the term "unmarked code" for the language or dialect that would be expected in a particular type of interaction, and the term "marked code" for the choice of a language or dialect which flouts the norm. She also says that dense code-switching can itself constitute a code.
19 See Deumert et al. (2005) for an account of the impact of language and other factors on migrants' opportunities in Cape Town.

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Index

Abdulaziz-Mkilifi, M.H. 22
Abidjan 2, 3, 9, 15, 64, 103–14
  language attitudes in 103
accommodation 38, 42, 93
Accra 12, 13, 14, 15, 19–31, 115–30
  administrative areas of 119
  four language system in 19–20
  geography of 119–20
  history of 24–5
  linguistic profile of 19–20, 120–1
  population growth in 21, 118
  sprawl area 115, 116, 120
Adeniran, Wale 139
advertising 4, 16, 126, 158–64
Afolayan, A.A. 136
Afrikaans 9, 16, 194–5, 197, 199
  as medium of instruction 197
  as official language in South Africa 197
  prestige of 203
Afro-Brazilians 132
agreement
  in Bantu 67
  in Lingala 67–8
  in Swahili 178, 183, 186, 187–8
Aguda 132
Akan 13, 14, 15, 120–1
  as lingua franca in Accra 126
  as lingua franca of southern Ghana 20, 28
  predominance of in Accra 19
  as a second language 122, 130
  as threat to Ga 115
Akwamu 24
Algeria 14, 35–6, 47–8
Amselle, Jean-Loup 97
Amselle, Jean-Loup and Elikia M'Bokolo 92
Al-Andalus 33
Angola 51, 64, 193
apartheid 191, 198, 199, 200, 203
Arabic 14, 32–49
  Hilalian dialects 34
  loans in Swahili 189
  rural dialects in North Africa 32–4
  script 4, 195
  urban dialects in North Africa 32–49
  western dialects 34
argot 9, 94, 106
army 55, 59, 61
  colonial in Ghana 20
  in Zaire 61, 62
Arusha Declaration 155, 166
Asante 129
Asia 17, 153, 192, 193, 194, 195
Asiwaju, A.I. 134, 137
aspect 8, 54
  in Lingala 67, 68
Attécoubé 106
Australia 10, 197

Backhaus, Peter 4
Bagamoyo 166
Bamako 11, 13, 15, 86–102, 104
Bamakokan 91, 94, 95
Bambara 99
  as lingua franca in Bamako 104
Bantu languages 50, 51, 53, 57, 160, 178, 179
Batibo, Herman 155, 156

Baule
  as source of borrowing in Nouchi 105
Bawku 22
Bedouin 33
Bendugu 90, 91, 92
Bendugukan 92
Benin 15
Berbers 39
Bete
  as source of borrowing in Nouchi 105
bilingual vernacular
  in Cape Town 16, 191–209
bilingualism 133
  passive 12
  in Porto Novo 141, 142, 143
  Swahili-English 152
billboards 4, 16, 126, 152–77
Bleek, W. H. 57
Blommaert, Jan 152
Bobangi 52, 53
  in genesis of Lingala 52–5, 58, 66, 69
Bobangi pidgin 56, 60, 69
Bokamba, Eyamba 143, 145
border 94, 97, 119, 131, 132
  Benin-Nigeria 3, 9, 15, 134
  Burundi-Tanzania 181
  Senegal-Mauritania 73, 77
  Tanzania-Congo 181
borrowings 3, 7, 8, 9, 69, 207
  in Afrikaans 202
  in Arabic 37
  in Bamakokan 95
  in Ga 26
  in Nouchi 105
  in Wolof 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 78, 81, 82, 83, 84
  see also loans
Bourdieu, Pierre 100
Brazzaville 14, 50–70
Brubaker, Rogers 87, 88, 101
Brubaker, Rogers and Frederick Cooper 13
Bujumbura 16, 178–90
Buli 22
Burundi 16, 178–90
  newspapers in 181
  radio in 181
  television in 181

Calvet, Louis Jean 4, 17, 109
Calvinism 193, 195
Cape Dutch 194, 195, 208
Cape Dutch pidgin 194
Cape Town 6, 16, 191–209
  anglicization campaign in 196
Casablanca 13, 14, 32, 35, 38–49
Catholic Church
  in Burundi 182
  in Kinshasa 64–5, 66
Catholic Diocese of Kinshasa
  Lingala as official language of 64–5
Caubet, Dominique 37
Central African Republic 63, 64
Chapel Street 200
Christianity 79, 147, 148, 149, 150, 193
Christians 79, 123, 134, 141, 196
city 1–18
  definition of 23
code-mixing 3, 68, 72, 87, 95
  in advertising 153
code-switching 32, 72, 96, 117, 118, 179, 182, 183, 209
Congo River 50–70
convergence 7, 200, 206
Cooper, Robert 70
Côte d'Ivoire 15, 90, 103–14
Cotonou 136, 137, 138
Coulmas, Florian 152, 164
creole 7, 10, 11, 77, 79–80, 82, 180, 193, 194
creolization 178, 179, 195
  cultural 79
  of Lingala 55–7
Criper, Lindsay 27

Dagaare 22, 122
Dakar 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 13, 71, 73, 74, 84, 104
  founding of 83
Dako, Kari 27

Dakubu, M.E.K. 17, 27, 30, 115, 118, 120, 121, 122, 123, 125
Dangme 25, 26, 120–1
Dar es Salaam 4, 16
  billboards in 158–64
  Central Business District 159, 160, 161, 163, 166
  linguistic profile of 154
  markedness of Swahili in 166
Defi 132, 134, 138
Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) 50–70
Dendane, Zoubir 36
Descemet, Louis 73, 81, 82
Deuber, Dagmar 17
Dholuo 189
dialect contact
  in Morocco 36, 39, 40
diglossia 137, 150
digraphia 4
Digo 189
Diop, Cheikh Anta 99
Dioula
  as source of borrowing in Nouchi 105
District Six 16, 197, 200, 204
  history of 199
Dogon 93, 94
Duruma 189
Dutch 26, 73, 76, 192, 193, 202
  in Cape Town 194
  as a lingua franca 195
  as an official language of the Union of South Africa 197

Eastern Cape 207
Eckert, Andreas 27
education 3, 4, 34, 36, 39, 60, 80, 105, 108, 111–12, 137, 145, 155–7, 195, 197
Egun 15, 130, 135
  as home language in Porto Novo 144–5
  as lingua franca in Porto Novo 150
elite 3, 34, 35, 37, 97, 105, 157, 160, 161, 166, 167
e-mail 5
English 3, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 120–1, 129
  in Accra 24
  Accra variety 27–8
  association with globalization in Tanzania 163
  as colonial language 20
  in Ghana 27
  as global lingua franca 167
  as language of instruction
    in Cape Town 197
    in Tanzania 155
  as official language in Tanzania 154, 155
  in Porto Novo 131, 136, 143
  prestige of in Tanzania 157
  as source of borrowing in Nouchi 105
  as symbol of elitism in Tanzania 158, 167
epilinguistic discourse 96, 98, 99
erasure 11
ethnicity 13, 23, 24, 90, 96–8, 100, 116, 139, 140
  and language use in Porto Novo 148–9
ethnolinguistic vitality 115, 116–18
Europe 7, 11, 51, 53, 64, 65, 86, 98, 99, 100, 107, 153, 197, 199
Ewe 20, 120–1

Faidherbe, Louis 73, 80, 81, 82
Fante 24
Fasold, Ralph 132, 134
Ferrando, Ignacio 34
Fez 13, 14, 32, 33, 35, 36, 47
fieldwork 15, 16, 90, 103, 167, 201
  in Accra 116, 127
  in Casablanca 38
Fishman, Joshua 144
Flaaitaal 9, 10, 207
Fon 132, 133, 134, 138, 143
footing 191, 205
four language system 19–20
français populaire d'Abidjan 105, 109, 114

France
  immigration to 100
francophonie 11, 133
Freetown 6
French 3, 10, 15, 95, 100, 106
  in Burundi 180
  in Côte d'Ivoire 103, 104, 108–9, 111
  in Democratic Republic of Congo 66
  as language of instruction
    in Benin 139
    in Burundi 181
    in Porto Novo 131, 146
  as lingua franca in Porto Novo 150
  in Mali 95
  as official language
    of Benin 150
    of Côte d'Ivoire 103, 104
  in Porto Novo 131, 137
  in Senegal 71
Fula 71, 93
Fulani 30, 122
Fulɓe 87
  see also Fulani; Peul

Ga 13, 14, 15, 21, 24
  funerals 123
  home territory of 20
  naming ceremonies 123
  origins of 25
  structural features of 25
Ga township 120
Ga Traditional Council 115
Gabon 51
gender 35, 36, 37, 42–5, 46, 47
German
  loans in Swahili 189
Ghana 19, 20, 22, 27, 28, 30, 136
Gikuyu 189
Giles, Howard 115, 116, 122
Giryama 189
globalization 10–11, 88, 100, 157, 158, 162, 163
Gorée 14, 73, 76–7, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83
Gorter, Durk 4
Gouaini, Elhousseine and Ndiassé Thiam 17
Goyvaerts, Didier 9
grammatical restructuring 8
Grant, R. and P. Yankson 118, 119
graphic environment 4–5, 16
Guang 25
Gujurati
  loans in Swahili 189

Haalpulaar 71
Hausa 8, 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 120–1
  in Accra 27, 29, 30
  association with Islam 28
  as lingua franca 21
    in colonial armed forces 25
  as lingua franca of northern Ghana 20
Heath, Jeffrey 33
Heine, Bernd 17
Heine, Bernd and Tania Kuteva 7
Hillili, Abdelaziz 37
Homowo festival 123
Huber, Magnus 27
Hulstaert, Gustaaf 53, 55, 57, 59, 61
hunter-gatherers 192
hybrid language 15, 74, 103, 104, 105, 107, 207
hybridity 97

identity 1, 45, 78, 87, 88, 89, 90, 98, 99, 100, 101, 103, 110, 203
  construction of 87, 93
  critique of 13, 93, 99
  discourses of 98, 100
  ethnic 13, 23, 24, 28, 29
  Fessi 43, 44, 45, 46, 47
  hybrid 47
  Ivorian 109
  linguistic 29, 107
  post-ethnic 13, 28
  urban 3, 9, 13, 24
Igbo
  in Benin 136–7
Igué, A.M. 136–7, 144

immigration
to Accra 25, 115, 118
to Cape Town 207
to France 100
to Porto Novo 132
India 193
Indonesia 193
Indoubil 9, 10, 67, 68
Indoubill *see* Indoubil
innovation 26, 33
internet 5
Irvine, Judith T. 17
Irvine, Judith T. and Susan Gal 11
Iscamtho 9, 207
Islam 4, 33, 79
in Accra 28
in Bujumbura 182
in Cape Town 193, 195
in North Africa 33
in Porto Novo 138, 147, 149, 150
in Senegal 79
Ivory Coast *see* Côte d'Ivoire

Jabeur, Mohamed 35
Jeater, Diana 17
Johnson, Bruce C. 22
joking relationship 95
Joola 6, 10
Juillard, Caroline 6, 10, 17, 95, 102

Kaaps 200, 202, 206
Kangaba 92
Kariakoo 159, 160
Khoikhoi 192, 193, 194
Kichaga 189
Kiessling, Roland and Maarten Mous 8, 9, 107, 113
Kihaya 189
Kijtonyama 160
Kikongo 51, 60
Kilson, Marion 123
Kita 90, 91, 97
Kitakan 91
Kitetela 60
Kimberley 196
Kinondoni 160
Kinshasa 14, 51, 53, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 67, 68
Kinyamwezi 189
Kirundi 180, 181, 182
Kisukuma 189
Kiswahili *see* Swahili
Kizaramo 189
Klinkenberg, Jean-Marie 111
koiné 7, 14, 23, 24, 27, 32, 34, 35, 36, 38, 48
kombuistaal 200
Kouadio N'Guessan, Jérémie 107
Kwa languages 19

Labov, William 17, 102, 111, 112
Lafage, Suzanne 107
Lake Nyanza [Lake Victoria] 189
Landweer, M. Lynn 117, 118, 120, 122, 130
language attitudes 3
in Abidjan 15, 103, 105, 111, 113
in Accra 24, 116
in Cape Town 192, 198–9
in Casablanca 42, 44, 45, 47
in Senegal 71, 73–6, 84
in Tanzania 166
language attrition 10
language boundaries 87
language contact 1, 2, 5–13, 16, 17, 72, 189, 190
in Abidjan 104
in Bujumbura 180
in Cape Town 192–8, 199
in the Congo basin 51, 55, 59, 66, 67, 69
in Porto Novo 134
between Wolof and French 71, 72, 80, 82, 83, 84
language continuum 15, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 101
lanuage endangerment 1, 10, 11, 26
language ideology 11, 73
language of wider communication (LWC) 50, 51, 61, 67
language mixing 72, 87, 95, 207

language policy
in Côte d'Ivoire 104, 105, 110, 111
in Tanzania 154, 155, 157
language shift 5, 6, 10, 13, 197
language variety 15, 100
laptot 78
Latin America 17
Lingala 2, 8, 11, 14, 50–70
in Angola 51
Brazzaville dialect 67, 68
in Central African Republic 51
creolization of 55–7
functional allocation of 58–66
in Gabon 51
grammatical features of 67, 68
Kinshasa dialect 67–8
lexifiers of 69
as lingua franca in Congo-Brazzaville 69
as lingua franca in the DRC 69
as lingua franca of Kinshasa 51, 61, 63
as lingua franca of Nouvelle-Anvers 59–60
littéraire 66–7
naming of 57–8
noun classes in 67
as official language of security forces 61, 69
origins of 51–4, 69
phonological features of 67, 68
in Sudan 51
symbolic power of 62
as trade language 51, 59
use in media 65
variation in 66–8
lingua franca 2, 6, 8, 10, 11, 14, 17, 104, 154
Akan as 21, 28, 115
Bambara as 104
Bobangi as 54
Dutch as 195
English as 16, 167, 195
Hausa as 12, 20, 25
Lingala as 14, 51, 53, 55, 57, 58, 59–60, 61, 63, 69
Malay as 193
Nouchi as potential 108
Portuguese Creole as 6, 193
Swahili as 104, 154, 157, 158, 160, 162, 167
urban 6, 7
Wolof as 2, 81, 82, 83, 104
Yoruba 150
linguistic homogenization 87, 88, 96, 97
linguistic insecurity 111, 112
linguistic landscape 4
linguistic practice 96
linguistic prestige 129
linguistic variables 37, 38, 39, 41
loans
in Afrikaans 201, 205
in Ga 26
in Kaaps 206
in Lingala 68
in Swahili 185, 189
in Wolof 71, 72, 74, 75, 81
see also borrowings
Lodge, Anthony 12
Lomongo 60
Luganda 189
Lumumba, Patrice 62

Maamobi 29, 30
Maghreb 14, 99
Makhudu, K.D.P. 9
Malagasy 193
Malay 193, 194, 195
as lingua franca in Cape Town 194
Mali 11, 15, 86–102, 104, 110
national languages of 95, 102
Malinke 90, 93
Mande 90, 92, 93
Mandinka 7, 10, 90
morphological variation in 91
Mangála 57, 67, 68
Mankanza Station 69
Manzese 159, 161, 162, 163, 166, 167
markedness
of English in Dar es Salaam 165–6
markedness model 164–5
Matrix Language Frame model 72

Mazrui, Ali and Alamin Mazrui 156, 158
McCormick, Kay 17
media 5, 37, 65, 88, 98, 99, 100, 103, 126, 127, 156, 158, 162
Meeuwis, Michael 53, 54, 55, 57, 58, 59, 69
métis 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 84
Midiohouan, Guy Ossito 137, 144
Miehe, Gudrun 17
migration 4, 6, 11, 64, 132
  to Abidjan 104
  to Accra 19, 21
  to Cape Town 191, 197, 207
  inter-African 64
  to Kinshasa 62
  to North Africa from Spain 33
  rural-urban 34, 36, 104, 156, 196
Miji Kenda 189
Milroy, Lesley 17
Mina 132, 133, 134, 138, 143
minority languages 2, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 135, 138, 142, 143, 149
Minyanka 93
missions 59
  Catholic 61, 79
  Scheutist 55, 59, 60–1
Mnazi Mmoja 160
mobility 34
  of West African populations 92
  upward 203
Mobutu Sese Seko 62, 65
modernity 3, 74, 84, 91, 93
Morocco 14, 32–49
morphological simplification 8, 178
Mudimbe, Valentin 98
Mufwene, Salikoko S. 194
multilingualism 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 10, 14, 15, 17, 23, 32, 86, 87, 95, 131, 153
  in Abidjan 103, 106
  in Accra 20, 22, 24, 27–39
  in Bawku 22
  history of
    in Porto Novo 131, 132–4
  in Mali 92, 95
  societal 5, 6, 95, 132
    in Porto Novo 134
  urban 22, 30
Mumbanza, J.E. 52
music 69, 124, 127, 196
  Congolese 51, 63–4, 66, 69
Myers-Scotton, Carol 3, 72, 164–5, 209

Nairobi 9, 104
naming ceremonies
  Ga 123
newspapers 65, 87, 105, 127, 136, 158, 166, 181
Nguni languages 207
Niamey 12
Niger 12
North Africa 14, 32–49
North America 10, 11
Nouchi 9, 15, 103–14
  attitudes towards 111
  as language of interethnic communication 108, 109
  as potential lingua franca 108
  as potential national language 109
  spread of 107
noun classes 8
  in Lingala 67
  in Swahili 178, 182, 183, 186, 187
Nouvelle-Anvers 56, 58, 59–60, 61, 69
Ntshangase, Dumisani K. 9

Obutu 24
official language 2, 3, 4
  of Benin 134, 136, 137, 148, 150
  of Burundi 181
  of Congo 61, 66, 69
  of Côte d'Ivoire 104, 105, 110
  of Mali 87, 95
  of Senegal 71, 84
  of South Africa 197
  of Tanzania 152, 154, 155, 156, 157
olof piir 73, 74
orthography 189
Oosgrensafrikaans 197
Oyo Empire 131

Paris 11
Parrinder, Geoffrey 132
Peul 93, 94, 95, 97, 99
  see also Ful6e; Pulaar
Pidgin 50, 52, 53, 54, 56, 57, 58
  Bobangi 54, 56, 60, 69
  Cape Dutch 194
Piller, Ingrid 153, 162
population growth 1, 113, 118
  in Accra 21
Porto Novo 15, 131–51
  dominant languages of 135
  ethnolinguistic make-up of 132, 139, 140
  founding of 132
  minority languages of 135
  multilingualism in 131
  religious makeup of 134, 141
  riots in 133
Portuguese 3, 4, 24, 26, 73, 76, 132, 136
Portuguese Creole 7, 10, 11, 80, 193, 194
Pulaar 4, 7, 10, 71, 81, 83, 97, 99

Rabat 14, 36
racial discrimination
  in South Africa 198
radio 62, 64, 128, 158, 181, 207
radio stations
  in Abidjan 106
  in Accra 127, 129
  in DRC 63, 65, 87, 88
refugees 6, 33, 180, 199, 207
religion 4
  in Burundi 181
  in Cape Town 193, 195, 196
  in Congo 60, 69
  in Porto Novo 131, 134, 141, 150
  in Saint-Louis du Sénégal 79
repertoire 96
Ricou, Xavier 77
Roberge, P.T. 194
Roman script 4
Ross, J.A. 198
rural-urban continuum 3, 93, 118

Sagabari 90, 91, 92, 93
Sagabarikan 91–2
Sahel 12
Saint-Louis du Sénégal 14, 73, 77–8
  as cultural capital 83, 84
  decline of 84
  in 19th century 80–2
Salaga market 120, 121, 123
Samarin, William 53
San 192
Scotton, Carol M. 22
  see also Myers-Scotton, Carol
Searing, James 77, 78, 79
secret language 105
Seereer 10
Senegal 12, 71–85
Senghor, Léopold Sédar 99
Senufo 93
Seto 132, 134, 138, 143
Shell, R. 193
Sheng 9, 10
signares 76–7, 78, 79, 80, 84
Simone, AbdouMaliq 16
slaves
  in Benin 132
  in Cape Town 192, 193, 194, 195, 199
  in Senegal 77
social networks 6, 36, 42
Songhay 12, 93, 94
Soninke 93
Sotho 9, 207
soukous 51, 63
South Africa 9, 11, 12, 16, 191–209
Spink, Linette 16, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 190
students
  as actors in language change 105
Sudan 51
Survey 15, 17, 20, 22, 28, 29, 30
Swahili 8, 16, 51, 60, 152–77, 178–90
  agreement in 178, 183, 186, 187–8
  Bujumbura dialect 182, 183–5, 186
  dialectology 179
  as lingua franca 104, 154, 155, 157, 158, 160, 162, 167
  loans in 185, 189

markedness of in Dar es Salaam 166
as marker of Islam in Bujumbura 182
as marker of national identity in Tanzania 163
as market language in Bujumbura 181–2
as national language in Tanzania 155
as national lingua franca in Tanzania 167
noun classes in 178, 182, 183, 186, 187
resistance to
in Kenya 179
in Uganda 179
standard 178, 179, 180, 181, 183
as symbol of nationalism in Tanzania 167
Tanzanian colloquial 182
urban varieties of 190
word order in 183

Tamale 30
Tamasheq 12, 93
Tanzania 16, 50, 152–77, 179, 181, 182, 186, 190
linguistic culture of 156, 167
television 87, 88, 95
in Benin 137
in Burundi 181
in Côte d'Ivoire 106
in DRC 63
in Ghana 128
in Mali 95
in South Africa 207
tense 8
in Afrikaans 201, 202
in Bantu 54
in Indoubil 68
in Lingala 67
in Swahili 187
text messaging 5
Tshiluba 60
Tlemcen 14, 35–6, 47–8
Tofin 132, 134, 138, 143
Tori 132, 134, 138, 143
Trabelsi, Chadia 35
trade routes
Congo River 69
trans-Saharan 7, 33
triglossia 22
trotro 127, 128
Tsotsitaal 9, 207
Tunis 14, 35, 47, 48
Tunisia 14, 35, 47, 48

Ubungo 159, 160
ujamaa 155
University of Ghana 29, 116, 119
linguistics at 21
urban Arabic 32–49
phonological characteristics of 33, 35, 36, 37, 39–41
urban dialect 3
of Arabic 14, 32–49
of Wolof 71, 78, 82, 83, 84
prestige of 48
urban space 5, 89, 134, 143
urban vernacular 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
in Maghreb 32–49
of Ziguinchor 10
urban Wolof 2, 13, 71, 72
attitudes toward 73, 74, 75, 84
emergence of 73, 82
noun classes in 8
prestige of 73–4, 75
urbanism 14, 23, 26, 27, 30, 80
urbanization 1, 2, 3, 7, 23, 34, 36, 77, 86, 104, 113, 155, 156
Urdu
loans in Swahili 189

Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie [Dutch East India Company] 192, 193, 195
Vigouroux, Cécile B. 11
Vigouroux, Cécile B. and Salikoko S. Mufwene 10
vowel harmony 67

war 6, 12, 26, 64, 136, 196, 197
Weeks, John 56
Weme 132, 134, 138
Whitehead, John 52
Witwatersrand 196
Woɗaaɓe 12
Wolfram, W. 201
Wolof 2, 3, 10, 11, 14
  attitudes towards 71, 73–6, 84
  dominance of, in 18th century Saint-Louis 78, 79
  dominance of, in Gorée 78, 79
  French borrowings in 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 78, 81, 82, 83, 84
  as lingua franca 2, 81, 82, 83, 104
  as national language 71
  in 19th century Saint-Louis 80–2
  rural dialects 71, 73, 74, 84
  see also urban Wolof
Woolard, Kathryn 202
World War II 20, 21
written language 4

Xhosa 197, 198, 207
Xwala 132, 134, 138, 143

Yai, Olabiyi 136, 144
Yanco, Jennifer 12
Yopougon 106
Yoruba 15, 135–6
  as home language in Porto Novo 144–5
  as lingua franca in Porto Novo 150
  association with Islam in Porto Novo 149, 150
  Benin variety 136
  in Nigeria 136
  in Porto Novo 131
Yorubaland 131, 137
youth 1, 2, 8, 26, 86
youth language 8, 9, 10, 15, 67, 68, 105, 106, 107, 109, 111, 113, 180

Zande 60
Zanzibar 54, 179, 193
Zarma 12
Ziguinchor 6, 10, 11, 95
Zulu 9